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AN ABSTRACT OF THE LAWS

AGAINST

VICE AND IMMORALITY.

Profanation of the Lord's Day, and Drunkenness.

Profanation of the Lord's Day.

Offences.	*Statutes.*	*Penalties.*
ALL Persons, not having a reasonable Excuse, shall resort to their Parish Church or Chapel, (or to some Place of religious Worship allowed by the Toleration Act) on every Sunday,	1 Eliz. c. 2.	Penalty 1s. to the Poor, for every Offence; to be levied by Distress.
Absenting for a Month, - -	23 Eliz. c. 1.	Twenty Pounds per Month, or Forfeiture of Two Parts in Three of their Estates.
If a Twelvemonth or more,	3 Jac. c. 4.	
Such as meet out of their own Parish, upon the Lord's Day, for any Sport or Pastime, or such as shall use any unlawful Exercise or Pastime in their own Parish,	1 Car. 1. c. 1.	Penalty 3s 4d. to the Poor, or to be set in the Stocks for Three Hours. One Witness, View or Confession.
If any Carrier, Waggoner, Carman, Drover with Cattle, Butcher, Higgler, or their Servants, shall travel on the Lord's Day *,	3 Car. 1. c. 1. 29 Car. 2. c. 7.	Twenty Shillings for every Offence, to be levied by Distress and Sale, to the Use of the Poor.
If any Butcher, or any other for him, shall kill or sell any Victuals upon the Sunday; Two Witnesses, View or Confession,	3 Car. 1.	Shall forfeit 6s. 8d. if questioned within Six Months, to be levied, &c. or may be sued for in Sessions.
If any Shoe-maker shall shew, with Intent to sell, any Boots, Shoes, &c. on Sunday,	1 Jac. c. 22.	Shall forfeit the Value of every such Pair, and also 3s. 4d. for every Pair.
If any Person do any worldly Labour, Business or Work, except Works of Necessity and Charity, on the Sabbath,	29 Car. 2. c. 7.	Shall forfeit 5s.
If any Person shall cry, shew forth, or put to Sale, any Wares, Fruit, Goods, &c. on Sunday (except Milk and Mackerel, before and after Divine Service)	29 Car. 2. c. 7. 10 & 11 W. c. 24.	Shall forfeit the said Wares, Fruit, Goods, &c. to the Use of the Poor.
No Person shall use or travel, upon the Lord's Day, with any Boat, Wherry, &c. except allowed by one Justice, and except a certain Number of Watermen on the Thames,	29 Car. 2. 11 & 12 W. c. 21.	Penalty 5s. Every Person must be impeached, upon this Act, within Ten Days.
No Persons shall open any House, or other Place, which shall be used for Public Entertainment or Amusement, or for publicly debating on any Subject, upon any Part of the Lord's Day, and to which Persons shall be admitted by the Payment of Money, or by Tickets sold for Money,	21 Geo. 3. c. 49.	Penalty £200. The Conductor £100; the Door-keeper, Servant, or other Person, who shall deliver Tickets, or receive Money, £50 each.
Any Person advertising any such Public Entertainment, Amusement or Meeting, or any Person publishing such,	21 Geo. 3. c. 49.	Penalty £50. for every such Offence, to any Person suing for the same, in any of the Courts at Westminster.
If any Person shall take or use any Gun, or other Engine, for destroying Game, on a Sunday, or Christmas Day,	13 Geo. 3. c. 80.	Shall forfeit, for the first Offence, not exceeding £20; and so on, to be recovered by Distress; and the Information must be brought within One Calendar Month.

* Fish-carriages shall be allowed to pass on Sundays, 2 Geo. 3. c. 15.

Drunkenness.

Offences.	*Statutes.*	*Penalties.*
If any be convicted of being drunk, by One Witness, View or Confession, and the Party confessing a good Witness against another offending at the same Time,	4 Jac. 5. 21 J. c. 7.	Penalty 5s. first Offence, to the Churchwardens; and, for Want of Distress, to sit in the Stocks Six Hours.
If any Alehouse-keeper be convicted of Drunkenness, he is disabled, for Three Years, to keep any Alehouse, besides the Penalties above mentioned,	7 Jac. c. 10.	For second Offence, must be bound in £10, with Two Sureties to good Behaviour; and, for Want of Sureties, to be sent to Gaol.
This Conviction of Drunkenness must be within Six Months after the Offence committed.		If the Constable levy not the Forfeitures, he forfeits 10s. to the Poor.

Blasphemy, Profane Swearing, and Libels.

Blasphemy and Profaneness.

Offences.	*Statutes.*	*Penalties.*
All Blasphemies against God; all profane Scoffing at the Holy Scriptures, or exposing any Part of them to Contempt or Ridicule; and all open Lewdness, grossly scandalous,	1 Haw. 6, 7.	Are punishable by Fine and Imprisonment, and also such corporal Punishment according to the Heinousness of the Crime.
Also seditious Words, in Derogation of the established Religion,	1 Hawk. 7.	Are indictable, as tending to a Breach of the Peace.
If any Person shall, in any Stage Play, Interlude, Show, May-game, or Pageant, jestingly or profanely speak or use the holy Name of God, or of Christ Jesus, or of the Holy Ghost, or of the Trinity,	3 Jac. c. 21.	He shall forfeit £10; Half to the King, and Half to him that shall sue.
If any Person, having been educated in, or at any Time having made Profession of the Christian Religion in this Realm, shall, by writing, printing, teaching, or advised speaking, deny any one of the Persons in the holy Trinity to be God, or shall assert or maintain there are more Gods than one; or shall deny the Christian Religion to be true, or the holy Scriptures to be of Divine Authority; and shall be convicted thereof, in any of the Courts at Westminster, or at the Assizes, on the Oaths of Two Witnesses,	9 & 10 W. c. 32.	Shall, for the first Offence, be incapable to have any Office, ecclesiastical, civil, or military, (unless he shall renounce such Opinion in the Court where he was convicted, within Four Months after such Conviction); and for the second Offence, he shall be disabled to be Plaintiff, Guardian, Executor, or Administrator, to take any Gift or Legacy, or to bear any Office, and shall be imprisoned for Three Years.
Information to be laid within Four Days after the Words spoken; and the Prosecution of such Offence to be within Three Months after such Information.		

Profane Swearing.

Offences.	*Statutes.*	*Penalties.*
If any Person shall profanely curse or swear, and be thereof convicted, on Confession, or Oath of One Witness, before any Justice or Mayor,	19 Geo. 2. c. 21.	Every Labourer, Common Soldier, and Seaman, 1s. Every other Person under the Degree of a Gentleman, 2s.
A Constable, upon his own Hearing, may secure, and the Party be convicted upon the Oath of such Constable.		And every Gentleman, or Person of superior Rank, 5s. — Second Offence double, &c. — And in Default of Payment, to be sent to the House of Correction.
If such Person shall curse or swear in the Presence and Hearing of a Justice (or Mayor), he shall convict him without further Proof.		
If the Justice omits his Duty, in the Execution of this Act,		He forfeits £5. — Half to the Poor, and Half to him who shall sue, &c.
If the Constable omits his Duty, One Witness,		He forfeits 40s. to be levied by Distress; Half to the Informer, and Half to the Poor.
This Act is to be read in all Parish Churches, and Public Chapels, the Sunday after every Quarter Day.		Penalty £5. to be levied by Warrant from any Justice.

Libels.

Offences.	*Statutes.*	*Penalties.*
Not only he who composes a Libel, or procures another to compose it, but also he who publishes or procures another to publish it, may be punished by	1 Hawk. 196.	Fine, and also to suffer such corporal Punishment as to the Court in Discretion shall seem proper.
Libels as having a direct and immediate Tendency to a Breach of the Peace,	2 Hawk. 40.	Are indictable before Justices of the Peace.

Riotous Houses, Brothels, Obscene Books, &c.

Riotous and Disorderly Houses.

Offences.	*Statutes.*	*Penalties.*
Inn-keepers, Alehouse-keepers or Victuallers, that suffer any of the same City, Town, or Village, to continue Tippling in their Houses, *One Witness*, View or Confession, and the Party confessing a good Witness against another offending at the same Time,	1 Jac. c. 9. 21 Ja. 7.	Ten Shillings, to be levied by Distress and Sale; and, for Want, to be committed till Payment, and disabled, for Three Years, from keeping any Alehouse. Constables to forfeit 40s. for not levying Penalty.
If any Inn-keeper, &c. suffer any Person whatsoever to continue tippling in his House, Two Witnesses or View.	1 Ja. 9. 21 Ja. 7. 1 Car. 4.	Ten Shillings, to be levied; and, for Want of Distress, committed till Payment.
Townsmen, or others, which shall remain tippling in any Inn, Alehouse or Victualling House, One Witness, View or Confession.	4 Ja. 5. 21 Ja. 7.	Three Shillings and Four-pence, to be levied by Distress, after One Week's Neglect of Payment, or to sit in the Stocks Four Hours.
Constables shall be charged on their Oaths, to present Offences committed against these Acts.	1 Car. 4. 21 Ja. 7.	The Constable, for his Neglect, forfeits 10s.
Persons able to work, who do not use proper Means to get Employ, or who neglect their Work, and spend their Money in Alehouses and Places of bad Repute, or who shall not apply a proper Portion of their Earnings to the Maintenance of their Wives and Families, by which they, or any of them, shall become chargeable to the Parish,	30 Geo. 2. c. 24. 32 Geo. 3. c. 45.	To be considered as idle and disorderly Persons, subject to One Month's Imprisonment. Persons merely tippling in Public Houses, forfeit 3s. 4d. for each Offence.
Any House, Room, Garden, or other Place, kept for public Dancing, Music, or other Entertainment, in London, or within Twenty Miles thereof, without Licence,	25 Geo. 2. c. 36.	Gaming in Public Houses, from 5s. to 20s. for each Offence. The Keeper thereof shall forfeit £100, with full Costs, to him who shall sue, in Six Months, in any of the Courts at Westminster.

Brothels, and Lewdness.

Offences.	*Statutes.*	*Penalties.*
Constables, on Notice in Writing, by Two Inhabitants paying Scot and Lot, of Persons keeping Bawdy-Houses.	25 Geo. 2. c. 36. 28 Geo. 2. c. 19.	To prosecute, under the Penalty of £20. All reasonable Expences to be paid by the Parish.
Constables, with a Search-Warrant, may enter any Bawdy-House, and arrest Persons with lewd and disorderly Women.	25 Geo. 2. c. 36. By the Com. Law.	Constables neglecting to prosecute any such, shall forfeit £20.
Any Person who shall act or behave as Master or Mistress, or as the Person having the Care or Management of any Bawdy-House, shall be deemed to be the Keeper.	25 Geo. 2. c. 36.	Liable to be prosecuted and punished as such, although not the real Owner or Keeper.

Obscene Books and Prints.

Offence.	*Statutes.*	*Penalties.*
Persons selling obscene Books and Prints,	Com. Law.	May be indicted, imprisoned, and put in the Pillory.
N. B. Any Hawker, or Pedlar, found trading without a Licence, shall, on Confession or Proof, on the Oath of One Witness,	29 Geo. 3. c. 26.	Forfeit £40, by distress to be levied, or be committed to Gaol, or the House of Correction, till Penalty paid.

Gaming, Lotteries, False Weights, &c. and Cruelty.

Gaming Houses.

Offences.	*Statutes.*	*Penalties.*
Keepers of Play-Houses and unlawful Games, upon View,	33 Hen. 8. c. 9.	Forty Shillings, and Imprisonment until he become bound by Recognizance to keep no more.
Officers to search, every Month.		Penalty 40s.
Those who play in such Houses,		Penalty 6s. 8d. and Imprisonment.
Fraud in Play or Betting,	16 Car. 2. c. 7.	Forfeit treble Value.
If any Two Inhabitants (paying Scot, &c.) of any Parish, shall give Notice to any Constable of such Parish, of any Person keeping a Gaming-House, or other disorderly House,	25 Geo. 2. c. 36.	Such Constable shall enter into a Recognizance to prosecute at the next Quarter Sessions.
If any Person shall win or lose at Play, or by betting, at any one Time, the Sum or Value of £10; or, within the Space of Twenty-four Hours, the Value of £20,	9 An. c. 14. 18 Geo. 2. c. 34.	Liable to be indicted for such Offence; and, being convicted, shall be fined Five Times the Value of the Sum won or lost.
N. B. No other than the Plaintiff and Defendant incapacitated from being a Witness, by Reason of having played, &c.	18 Geo. 2. c. 34.	

Lotteries and Little Goes.

The several Statutes are, the 10 & 11 Wil. c. 17. — 9 An. c. 6. — 10 An. c. 26. — 8 Geo. 1. c. 2. — 9 Geo. 1. c. 19. — 6 Geo. 2. c. 35. — 12 Geo. 2. c. 28. — 13 Geo. 2. c. 19. — 17 Geo. 2. c. 5. — 18 Geo. 2. c. 34. — 12 Geo. 3. c. 28 — 27 Geo. 3. c. 1. — 27 Geo. 3. c. 3. — and 42 Geo. 3. Little Goe Act.

Offences.	*Statutes.*	*Penalties.*
Persons setting up illegal Lotteries, or Little Goes, or Clubs for Lotteries or Raffles, shall be declared Rogues and Vagabonds,	27 Geo. 3. c. 3. 42 Geo. 3. Little Goe Act.	Punished by immediate Imprisonment, even to the Extent of Six Months, and may be subject to £100 Penalty.

False Weights and Measures.

The several Statutes are, 8 Hen. 6. c. 5. — 11 Hen. 7. c. 4. — 16 Cha. 1. c. 19. — 22 Cha. 2. c. 8. — 22 & 23 Cha. 2. c. 12. — 29 Geo. 2. c. 25. — 31 Geo. 2 c. 17. — 14 Geo. 3. c. 23. — 26 Geo. 3. c. 3. — 28 Geo. 3. c. 37. — 35 Geo. 3. c. 102. — 36 Geo. 3. c. 85. — 37 Geo. 3. c. 143.

Offences.	*Statutes.*	*Penalties.*
Persons using false Weights and Measures,	35 Geo. 3.	Liable to a Penalty of 40s. for every Offence.
Besides the Punishments under several Statutes, for selling by false Weights and Measures,	Com. Law.	The same may be punished by Indictment, Fine and Imprisonment.

Cruelty to Animals.

Offences.	*Statutes.*	*Penalties.*
If any Person, hired or employed to drive any Cattle within the Bills of Mortality, shall, by Negligence or ill Usage in the driving such, be the Means that any Mischief shall be done by any such, &c. committed to his Care; or if any such Driver shall in any wise misbehave himself in the Driving, Care or Management of any such Cattle, by the improper Driving, Treating or Using of such,	14 Geo. 3. c. 87. 21 Geo. 3. c. 67.	Shall forfeit, not exceeding 20s. or less than 5s. and on Nonpayment, to be committed to the House of Correction to hard Labour, not exceeding One Month.

This Abstract may be had separate, Price Three-Pence, or Two Shillings per Dozen.

PART THE FIRST,

OF AN

ADDRESS TO THE PUBLIC,

FROM THE

SOCIETY FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF VICE,

INSTITUTED, IN LONDON, 1802.

SETTING FORTH,

WITH A LIST OF THE MEMBERS,

THE

UTILITY AND NECESSITY OF SUCH AN INSTITUTION,

AND ITS

CLAIM TO PUBLIC SUPPORT.

WHEN BAD MEN COMBINE, THE GOOD MUST ASSOCIATE.....*BURKE.*

LONDON:

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T.

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The Rev. John Williams, Chiswick.
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Francis Wilson, Esq. Vauxhall.
Arthur Windus, Esq. War-Office.
Abraham Winterbottom, Esq. Threadneedle-street.
George Wolff, Esq. America-square.
Mr. George Woodfall, Paternoster-row.
N. W. Fitzroy-street, Fitzroy-square.

Y.

Admiral Sir G. Young, Great Russel-street, V. P.
Mr. George Young, Old Broad-street.

By the KING.

A PROCLAMATION,

For the Encouragement of Piety and Virtue, and for preventing and punishing of Vice, Profaneness, and Immorality.

GEORGE R.

WHEREAS We cannot but observe, with inexpressible Concern, the rapid Progress of Impiety and Licentiousness, and that Deluge of Profaneness, Immorality, and every Kind of Vice, which, to the Scandal of Our Holy Religion, and to the evil Example of Our loving Subjects, hath broken in upon this Nation: We therefore esteeming it Our indispensible Duty to exert the Authority committed to Us, for the Suppression of these spreading Evils, fearing that lest they should provoke God's Wrath and Indignation against Us, and humbly acknowledging that We cannot expect the Blessing and Goodness of Almighty God (by whom Kings reign, and on which We entirely rely) to make our Reign happy and prosperous to Ourself and Our People without a Religious Observance of God's Holy Laws: To the

Intent that Religion, Piety, and Good Manners, may (according to Our most hearty Desire) flourish and increase under Our Administration and Government, have thought fit, by the Advice of Our Privy Council, to issue this Our Royal Proclamation, and do hereby declare Our Royal Purpose and Resolution to discountenance and punish all Manner of Vice, Profaneness, and Immorality, in all Persons of whatsoever Degree or Quality, within this Our Realm, and particularly in such as are employed near Our Royal Person; and that for the Encouragement of Religion and Morality, We will, upon all Occasions, distinguish Persons of Piety and Virtue, by Marks of Our Royal Favour: And We do expect and require, That all Persons of Honour, or in Place of Authority, will give good Example by their own Piety and Virtue, and to their utmost contribute to the discountenancing Persons of dissolute and debauched Lives, that they, being reduced by that Means to Shame and Contempt for their loose and evil Actions and Behaviour, may be thereby also enforced the sooner to reform their ill Habits and Practices, and that the visible Displeasure of good Men towards them, may (as far as it is possible) supply what the Laws (probably) cannot altogether prevent. And

We do hereby strictly enjoin and prohibit all Our loving Subjects, of what Degree or Quality soever, from playing, on the Lord's Day, at Dice, Cards, or any other Game whatsoever, either in Public or Private Houses, or other Place or Places whatsoever: And We do hereby require and command them, and every of them, decently and reverently to attend the Worship of God on the Lord's Day, on Pain of Our highest Displeasure, and of being proceeded against with the utmost Rigour that may be by Law. And, for the more effectual reforming all such Persons, who, by reason of their dissolute Lives and Conversation, are a Scandal to Our Kingdom, Our further Pleasure is, and We do hereby strictly charge and command all our Judges, Mayors, Sheriffs, Justices of the Peace, and all other Our Officers and Ministers, both Ecclesiastical and Civil, and all other Our Subjects, to be very vigilant and strict in the Discovery and the effectual Prosecution and Punishment of all Persons who shall be guilty of excessive Drinking, Blasphemy, profane Swearing and Cursing, Lewdness, Profanation of the Lord's Day, or other dissolute, immoral, or disorderly Practices; and that they take care also effectually to suppress all publick Gaming Houses and other loose and

disorderly Houses, and also all unlicensed Publick Shews, Interludes, and Places of Entertainment, using the utmost Caution in licensing the same: Also to suppress all loose and licentious Prints, Books, and Publications, dispersing Poison to the Minds of the Young and Unwary, and to punish the Publishers and Venders thereof; and to put in Execution the Statute made in the Twenty-ninth Year of the Reign of the late King *Charles* the Second, intituled, *An Act for the better Observation of the Lord's Day, commonly called* Sunday; and also an Act of Parliament made in the Ninth Year of the Reign of the late King *William* the Third, intituled, *An Act for the more effectual suppressing of Blasphemy and Profaneness;* and also an Act passed in the Twenty-first Year of Our Reign, intituled, *An Act for preventing certain Abuses and Profanations on the Lord's Day, called* Sunday; and all other Laws now in Force for the punishing and suppressing any of the Vices aforesaid; and also to suppress and prevent all Gaming whatsoever, in Publick or Private Houses, on the Lord's Day; and likewise that they take effectual Care to prevent all Persons keeping Taverns, Chocolate Houses, Coffee Houses, or other Publick Houses whatsoever, from selling Wine, Chocolate, Coffee, Ale, Beer, or other

Liquors, or receiving or permitting Guests to be or remain in such their Houses in the Time of Divine Service on the Lord's Day, as they will answer it to Almighty God, and upon Pain of Our highest Displeasure. And for the more effectual Proceeding herein, We do hereby direct and command all Our Judges of Assize and Justices of the Peace, to give strict Charge at their respective Assizes and Sessions, for the due Prosecution and Punishment of all Persons that shall presume to offend in any of the Crimes aforesaid; and also of all Persons that, contrary to their Duty, shall be remiss or negligent in putting the said Laws in Execution; and that they do, at their respective Assizes and Quarter Sessions of the Peace, cause this Our Royal Proclamation to be publicly read in open Court immediately before the Charge is given. And We do hereby further charge and command every Minister in his respective Parish Church or Chapel to read or cause to be read this Our Proclamation at least Four Times in every Year, immediately after Divine Service, and to incite and stir up their respective Auditors to the Practice of Piety and Virtue, and the avoiding of all Immorality and Profaneness. And, to the End that all Vice and Debauchery may be prevented, and Religion and Virtue

practised by all Officers, Private Soldiers, Mariners, and others who are employed in Our Service by Sea and Land, We do hereby strictly charge and command all Our Commanders and Officers whatsoever, that they do take Care to avoid all Profaneness, Debauchery, and other Immoralities, and that by their own good and virtuous Lives and Conversation, they do set good Examples to all such as are under their Care and Authority; and likewise take Care of and inspect the Behaviour of all such as are under them, and punish all those who shall be guilty of any of the Offences aforesaid, as they will be answerable for the ill Consequences of their Neglect herein.

Given at Our Court at *St. James's*, the First Day of *June*, One thousand seven hundred and eighty-seven, in the Twenty-seventh Year of Our Reign.

GOD SAVE THE KING.

ADDRESS,

ADDRESS, &c.

IT is a truth too evident to be denied, not only that vice has of late advanced upon us with almost unexampled rapidity; but that it has assumed a more bold and daring appearance, stalking abroad in open day, both in defiance of shame, and of the correction of the laws. Not only have those habits of propriety, those customary regularities, that exterior and prescribed decency of conduct, "which de-"prive vice of its grossness," gradually declined, and almost wholly disappeared from among the lower orders; but a laxity of principle, a stupid indifference to virtue and religion, a morbid dissoluteness of morals, appear more or less to have pervaded all ranks of society. Our times have witnessed not only the most sanguinary revolution of states, but a most awful revolution of human sentiment. Those customs and opinions and feelings which age had rendered venerable, and prescription had sanctioned, the truth and excel-

lence of which our ancestors * had approved both by their precept and their example; those principles on which their conduct was grounded, and which they have transmitted to us, as an inestimable treasure, have been openly contradicted and insulted, and rejected as the bigoted notions of antiquity, or as the weak and driveling errors of childhood. All claim to prescription has not only been boldly challenged, but positively denied: the allowed feelings of our nature have been outraged: Religion †, the connecting bond and security of society, has been exploded: and into so desperate a delusion has the pride of human ability hurried the fallible intellect of man, as to tempt him calmly to prefer ideal system to practical experience; to sacrifice all our certain enjoyments to the uncertainty of spe-

* Plus apud me ANTIQUORUM AUCTORITAS valet—was said by no mean man of antiquity: it is a base, shallow and overweening presumption, the sure offspring of Ignorance and Vanity, which prompts us to arrogate all claim of Wisdom to ourselves, to despise the experience of Ages, to undervalue the proprieties of custom, and to consider the wisdom of our forefathers as inferior to our own.

† It seems scarcely to have been a doubt with an Heathen, whether if even superstition, the shadow of true religion, were abolished, society would not dispart and fall to ruin—Atque haud scio, an, pietate adversus deos sublatâ, fides etiam, et SOCIETAS HUMANI GENERIS, et unà, excellentissima virtus, justitia, tollatur.—*Cic. lib.* 1. *de nat. Deor.*

culation; to offer up millions as victims of fallacious theory; and, to complete the measure of human insanity, even to prostrate Revelation at the feet of Reason *. Through the mercy of God, the tempest has indeed passed over us; but though its fury have subsided, its wasting effects but too sensibly remain. The paroxysm of our disease has abated; but we are left

* The character of ATHEISM and TREASON combined is not new; its principal features are the same as they were above eighteen hundred years since.—Its appearance is the same—Color ei exsanguis, fœdi oculi.—Its mind is the same—Animus impurus diis hominibusque infestus.—Its language is the same—Itaque omnis gratia, potentia, honos, divitiæ, apud ILLOS sunt—the noble and opulent—NOBIS reliqueruñt pericula, repulsas, judicia, egestatem—etenim quis mortalium, cui virile ingenium est, tolerare potest, ILLIS divitias superare, quas profundant, in exstruendo mari, et montibus coœquandis; NOBIS rem familiarem etiam ad necessaria deesse? ILLOS binos, aut amplius domos continuare: NOBIS larem familiarem nusquam ullum esse.—Its pretext is the same; liberty must still be a cloak for licentiousness—Quin igitur expergiscimini? en illa, illa; quam sæpe optastis, LIBERTAS—Its lure is the same—Tum Catilina polliceri tabulas novas, PROSCRIPTIONEM LOCUPLETIUM, magistratus, sacerdotia, rapinas, alia omnia, quæ bellum atque lubido victorum fert.—Its extinction is equally formidable; it dies in desperation and madness—In confertissumos hostes incurrit, ibique pugnans confoditur—and let us not omit what roused this dreadful monster into action—Incitabant præterea CORRUPTI CIVITATIS MORES.—Let it be remembered, that this period of the Roman empire was almost immediately succeeded by a state of anarchy and confusion; and that when order was restored, it was on the ruins of civil liberty—May God grant that this lesson be not lost upon us!

shattered and distracted. But too evident marks of moral infirmity appear among us. Those pernicious principles which were of late openly defended, have indeed, by the bitterest experience, proved themselves to be fallacious. That tree which was planted by Infidelity, and nourished by Licentiousness, has been found to promise but delusive blessings; blast and mildew have fallen from its leaves, and its fruit has been desolation and death. We should willingly indeed indulge the pleasing hope that it is almost eradicated from among us; that we have witnessed its baneful influence, and are convinced that death alone can be its produce. Yet, the most favourable view of our present condition must convince us, that even should the plant be destroyed, its poisonous effects have not altogether disappeared. Our soil is still tainted; society is still infected *; religion is gradually waning into formality; a general negligence, not to say a disesteem,

* We have but too authentic information of this fatal truth. "For the Authority of Religion and Government, the duty of Allegiance, the regularity of subordination, and the respect due to superiors have been much weakened here—though the flame has been smothered before it could break out: and I am much mistaken, *if you have not every one of you seen this in the inmost recess of each private parish.*"—Bishop of Oxford's Charge, p. 7.—This is no common Authority, it is spoken e Cathedrâ, by a Bishop to his assembled Clergy.

on this important subject, but too evidently prevails; undue freedom of thinking has produced an undue freedom of action; the prescribed barriers of exterior decency are surpassed; and by gradual encroachments, vice is daily making such inroads among us, that, unless it be timely opposed, it affords but too certain a presage that religious principle will be swept away; that general licentiousness will abound; that the "cramps and bearings" which hold society together, will yield to the common pressure; and that when "the measure of our iniquity" is completed, God will "surely be avenged on such a nation as this."

How then shall this corruption be opposed? what human power shall be the means of effectually resisting it? it may be said, there are laws expressly provided for the suppression of enormities; let the Magistrates execute them on offenders; it is their duty, it is the purpose of their establishment, let them actively exert themselves to carry the existing laws into effect. It is perhaps the blessing of our times, not only that the means of executing the laws have been encreased by the establishment of the new system of Police; but that we have as active, diligent, and capable Magistrates as have ever graced the Bench; and yet indefatigable

as their endeavours have been to prevent or to punish vice, can it be denied that many gross irregularities, many instances of immorality and indecency daily occur, which even the utmost vigilance of office is unable to detect; or which are of so nice a complexion, so doubtful a nature, that though they may give great offence to society, no legal provision can correct them. Of positive offences the Magistrate may be generally able to take cognizance: but when it is considered how various and multiform vice is, it will appear that daily offences must be committed against morality and decency, which the Magistrate is either unable to correct, or which do not come within the scope of his information. The injury sustained by the offended party will commonly discover a legal remedy for positive outrage; but there are many offences which lie just without the boundary of the law; many evil practices which gradually lead to, and familiarize us with vice, the insensible tendency of which is to corrupt; which claim the most serious attention, and the most earnest endeavours to suppress them, before they ripen into positive criminality.* Bad actions repeated,

* The good effect of a Society for the Suppression of Vice may appear, in discountenancing and suppressing the first beginnings

become bad habits; and bad habits disqualify us for virtue, and mature us for vice: such irregularities, like the poisonous brood of the viper, demand a timely attention to prevent their growth into actual crimes. Laws are enacted to prevent the commission of evil, or to punish it when committed: and the execution of the law seems to be the proper duty of the Magistrate; but when it is considered how many irregularities exist, which there are no express provisions of law to correct, which a regard to shame and to public decency might be supposed to prevent; it must be evident that some extraordinary influence † is necessary to

of irregularity: when an evil has been long in existence, it is more difficult to suppress it; as it pleads the inveteracy of custom; and men are unwilling to part with those gratifications which, though of an irregular nature, they have uninterruptedly enjoyed. But if the first rise the origin of irregularity be discountenanced, its progressive malignity may be arrested, and a great subsequent evil effectually prevented. The Hydra may be strangled in its birth, which if suffered to grow may at length defy the utmost courage and skill.

† Such an extraordinary influence, the effect of good example, is alluded to, not only in the Proclamations of King William and Queen Ann, but also in that issued by his present Majesty for the Encouragement of Piety and Virtue, and for preventing and punishing of Vice, Profaneness and Immorality, in the year 1787.— "And we do expect and require That all persons of Honour, or in place of Authority, will give good example by their own piety and virtue, and to their utmost contribute to the discountenancing

diminish the growth of corruption; either by giving increased activity to the execution of the laws, or by holding up those irregularities which are too nice for correction, as shameful, and opprobrious, and a scandal to decency and virtue.

From whence then shall this influence arise? who shall undertake to give a more extended execution to the laws, or openly to discountenance immorality? The exertions of an individual may doubtless produce very excellent effects within the sphere in which they may operate; but he must be a man of no common hardihood, who could oppose his individual efforts, against the shameless, and desperate, and endlessly diversified machinations of vice. Who will individually trace corruption to its source? who will disclose its covert recesses? who will drag offenders into light? who will risque his personal safety against those, whose trade is rapine, and whose profession is hatred and hostility? and who, when offenders are detected, will be able to discharge the expences necessary to support their prosecutions?

persons of dissolute and debauched lives, that they, being reduced by that means to shame and contempt for their loose and evil actions and behaviour, may be thereby also enforced the sooner to reform their ill habits and practices, and that the visible displeasure of good men towards them may (as far as it is possible) supply what the laws (probably) cannot altogether prevent."

And how little general good would even the most active individual exertions be able to effect? Such complicated difficulties, such accumulated obstacles attend the most indefatigable activity of an individual, that it cannot be necessary to enlarge in proof of the inefficacy of such an attempt.*

The only effectual barrier, perhaps, which can be opposed to the overwhelming tide of corruption which threatens our repose is, the united efforts of individuals combining in one extensive and firm association, the virtue, wisdom, and energy of each.—Societies not only act with the greatest effect, but they afford a security for upright and impartial conduct. In them all particular prejudices, all partial views are absorbed in the prosecution of general good: in Societies the greater temper and forbearance are discernible; the sanguine spirit of some is counteracted by the cool and dispassionate temper of others; here offences will be patiently and impartially considered; here correction will be mild and placable in prevention, and firm and unbending in punishment; here the execution of the laws will be prompt and com-

* The various obstacles to the exertions of an *Individual* in suppressing vice, are very fully detailed in the Report of the Proclamation Society for 1799, p. 7. et seq.

prehensive; here the application of justice will be indiscriminate and general; neither wealth nor poverty, no rank or degree will elude their attention; here vigilance will be tempered with delicacy, and correction regulated by wisdom. In short, whatever prudence or moderation may suggest, or vigour and resolution accomplish, may derive their most forcible effect from a Society.

And, indeed, Societies * are the means to which men usually resort to give their designs both the most extensive and permanent effect. The combined wisdom and energy of individuals, concurring and co-operating in one united effort, has ever been considered to promise the most well-founded hope of success. In all ages and nations, the wisdom of experience has ever adopted this mean of execution

* "Whilst men are linked together, they easily and speedily communicate the alarm of an evil design. They are enabled to fathom it with common counsel, and to oppose it with united strength. Whereas when they lie dispersed, without concert, order or discipline, communication is uncertain, counsel difficult, and resistance impracticable.

"In a connexion, the most inconsiderable man adding to the weight of the whole, has his value, and his use; out of it, the greatest talents are wholly unserviceable to the publick.—When bad men combine, the good must associate, else they will fall, one by one, an unpitied sacrifice in a contemptible struggle."—— Thoughts on the Cause of the present Discontents. Burke's Works, 8vo. vol. 2. p. 329, 330.

as most operative and efficient: thus among ourselves, how numerous and how effectual are those bodies of men, who have not only united themselves for the best of purposes, Charity; but who have assembled together their collective wisdom, to superintend and direct their particular craft and profession? doubtless "in the "multitude of councellors" there is not only wisdom of deliberation, but a consistent and corresponding vigour of action. We need not, however, go far to prove the superiour efficacy of associated talents; instances the most fatally illustrative must be but too fresh in our minds, too warm in our recollection. It will scarcely be denied that Infidelity, Blasphemy, Treason, and Licentiousness have been let loose among us upon design. The dissolution of Moral Order has been attempted upon system; those who were enemies of the Throne and the Altar, the abettors of mischief, have but too successfully availed themselves of these means of accomplishing their objects: it has surely appeared beyond all reasonable doubt, that associations have been formed for the most nefarious purposes, which have threatened the very existence of civil society. Who will disbelieve, after such accumulated evidence, that Seditious Corresponding Societies, and others of a like des-

perate nature, have not shewn the too fatal efficiency of their institutions, from the spawn of Scepticism and Conspiracy, which has issued from them, and quickened into Infidelity and Treason. Such Societies have been powerful to overthrow and to destroy, why are not others to be instituted, which are equally powerful to uphold and to save? These associations have been but too successful in weakening and overturning respect for the laws; why are not others to be instituted to assist and enforce them? let us avail ourselves of the experience of an enemy, and counteract his efforts by using his own weapons against him; surely the same means which are thus perverted to destroy, may be effectually employed to preserve. Societies have but too forcibly proved their efficacy in the propagation of Vice; let us then use the same instrument, let us employ the same means in disseminating the contrary influence of Religion and Virtue.

These powerful means it has appeared might be effectually employed to oppose the growing licentiousness of the times. With this view the present Society for the Suppression of Vice has been established, by those who have witnessed our distempered condition with no common concern, and whose principles being strong to

save, have suggested to them the necessity of combining their individual efforts in support of the common cause of Virtue and Religion. They have long looked forward with anxious hope to that period, when the Friends of Social Order, would awake to the real condition of society; and by the adoption of extensively effectual measures, infuse a corrective energy into the moral body which might invigorate and preserve it. Of this design they have invited many to partake; and it has pleased God to grant them a support, extensive and rapid, beyond their most sanguine expectations—they have not confined themselves to sex * or rank;

* The LADIES are not only admitted to patronize and support this Society, they are earnestly solicited to use their endeavours in aid of its views. Female influence is not only powerful in particular instances, it affects the customs and manners of the community at large. Women are elevated in the scale of society, and that suavity of manners, which distinguishes modern from antient times, may justly be said to be, in a great measure, derived from the amiable operation of female influence: yet let us not forget, that even the suavity of female manners proceeds from a higher source; and that the superiour polish of modern life, is owing to a diffusion of the mild, conciliating, forbearing, and civilizing spirit, which is the discriminating characteristic of Christianity: it is to this the LADIES are indebted for their present elevated rank in society: in the heathen world they had few civil rights, and were almost in a state of slavery; but Christianity has broken down this offensive distinction. Surely then they are particularly called upon to afford their support in aid of an Institution, which professes as one of its objects, the protection of that religion to which they are so

as the cause concerns all, age, sex, and degree, are invited to uphold it; but that they might preserve unanimity, the essential bond of all associations, they have thought it prudent to confine their members to those who profess themselves to be of the Church of England,* as by law established. They have uniformly sought respectability of character, not being so anxious to obtain support merely, as that which was derived from the most promising sources, the support of principled and respectable men. This they have sought either in the middle or the higher walks of life: whether it be found in the decent retirement of private life, in the influence of office, or in eminence of station;

much indebted, and the preservation of those numberless blessings which are so closely connected with its existence. By adverting to the list of members placed at the head of this address, it will appear that the Society partake largely at present of female support; a very considerable proportion of their members consisting of LADIES.

* The Society are very far from assuming this exclusive appearance from any disrepect to the different bodies of Dissenters; as they are convinced that numbers of truly valuable and exemplary characters are to be found among every religious sect or persuasion. They beg leave to assure those who dissent from the Established Church, that the reasons which have induced them to confine themselves to those of their own communion, arises from the conviction, that every sect will accomplish those objects so desirable to all, in a more effectual manner, by confining their members, each to its own separate body.

judging, that it was not the number merely, or the rank, but the respectabilty of their members - which would afford them the most diffusive influence, and the most permanent success. They are desirous of obtaining the support of all, who really esteem our present civil and religious blessings, and who can prove the reality of their esteem by lending their assistance in defence of them. They are anxious to receive as members those worthy persons, who have the interests of morality and true religion at heart; and who wait only for an opportunity of knowing by what means they may render their good wishes and services most effectual. With respect to pecuniary aid, the amount of the subscription is left to the discretion of each individual, trusting, that from the numbers of which, it may be presumed, the Society will soon consist, a small annual sum from every member, will be found sufficient for all the purposes of the Institution.*

* As the great object of the Society is to diffuse a corrective and preserving influence through the community, they are more desirous of obtaining respectable personal patronage, than extensive pecuniary aid. Their principal view is to acquire the approbation and co-operation of those, who, by their example, and the temperate use of the existing laws, are desirous of discountenancing vice. As it is intended to use the most guarded moderation, it is hoped they will but seldom be compelled to resort

The outline of the objects the Society propose to effect is very comprehensive: it is, in brief, first, their intention to apply themselves to principles, knowing that if the source be pure, the stream will be pure also. With this purpose, they begin by putting those laws in force, which provide, as far as they appear to be practicable, FOR THE REGULAR OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD'S DAY. They are attempting to correct the general profanation of the Sabbath, the scandalous irregularities and indecencies of which, at present committed, threaten to break down the distinction between that consecrated day, and the six of ordinary labour; and to obliterate all sense of religion, by depriving the Sabbath of that discriminating character which marks it as a day devoted to God, and as particularly set apart for his worship. They will endeavour to prevent artificers from working at their ordinary callings;

to the extreme of legal correction: and they beg leave to assure such as may favour them with their support, that they may not only be free from the apprehension that any extraordinary application will be made to them, but that a small annual contribution from each member, will be found adequate to the demands of the Institution. As the particular sum contributed by each, does not appear in the list of subscribers, it may not be improper to state, that a *guinea* is the general amount of each subscription, though various other sums, of greater or less amount, have been received.

the carrying on of trades; the vending of their goods by shopkeepers; the open display of wares, but little differing, in appearance, from that of any ordinary day of sale; Publicans from entertaining persons unlawfully, and other enormities, which make irreligion a habit, and destroy all respect for the Lord's Day. At the same time they will temper their exertions with moderation, and be cautious in distinguishing between wilful and wanton violations of the Sabbath, and acts of duty and necessity.

Allied to the above is another evil, which is of no inferior magnitude at the present day. Infidelity and Insubordination, fostered by the licentiousness of the press, have raised into existence a pestilent swarm of BLASPHEMOUS, LICENTIOUS AND OBSCENE BOOKS AND PRINTS, which are insinuating their way into the recesses of private life, to the destruction of all purity of sentiment, and all correctness of principle. The suppression of this growing evil, has been one of the primary objects of the Society's attention; in effecting which, it has appeared, and does still appear to them, that they cannot give too vigorous an energy to the execution of the laws. Like contempt of the Sabbath, this also aims to vitiate or annihi-

late the influence of principle; it tends most wickedly to pollute and inflame the minds of the young and innocent, and to quicken the poisonous seeds of innate corruption, into immorality and vice. So alarming, indeed, is the progress of this malignant evil, that it appears to claim a very decided attention in the future deliberations of this Society.

It would be tedious to mention particularly the whole of those irregularities, indecencies, and crimes, of which breaches of the law consist, and which, in their effects, are so prejudicial to the interests of the community. Among others, is the PREVENTING OF FRAUDS, IN SELLING BY FALSE WEIGHTS AND MEASURES; THE PROTECTING OF FEMALE INNOCENCE, BY THE PUNISHMENT OF PROCURERS; THE CORRECTING THE COMPLICATED EVILS, RESULTING FROM LOTTERIES; THE REFORMING OF EXCESSES, COMMITTED IN RIOTOUS AND DISORDERLY HOUSES, BROTHELS, AND GAMING HOUSES; THE PUNISHING OF BREACHES OF THE PEACE, PROFANE SWEARING, LIBELLING, AND CRUELTY TO ANIMALS. Their object is to diminish the gross mass of public enormity, to circumscribe the wasting contagion of vice; to bring back a sense of public decency and morality, and by a temperate

enforcement of the laws, to effect a general respect for Civil Order and Religion.

In the prosecution of these objects, short as their date has already been, the Society have had ample encouragement to proceed. Their existence, indeed, is but of yesterday;* they have not been instituted above three quarters of a year, and yet have met with such ready support, such willing assistance, that their list contains above *five hundred and fifty* members: and so successful have they hitherto been, even in their infant state, in carrying some of the great objects of their establishment into effect; that they feel themselves emboldened already to state their pretensions to the attention of the public, and to claim their most zealous and extensive co-operation. Such a claim appears to derive support from the consideration, that we are reduced to a condition in which no ordinary measures will avail us, that something must be adopted, which will not apply a par-

* Small beginnings are by no means to be despised. It was from the united efforts of six individuals, that the Reformation Societies, at the end of the seventeenth century arose. CONCORDIA res PARVÆ crescunt—united exertions may effect most things; while, by supineness, negligence, and a want of co-operation—DISCORDIA MAXIMÆ dilabuntur. The cloud which arose out of the sea, no larger than a man's hand, in a short time overspread the whole land, and was productive of general plenty.

tial, local, or transient remedy, but a general, durable, and effectual relief. Our malady, though almost desperate, may be yet recoverable; let the remedy be proportioned to the exigency of the case; the welfare of society is at stake, let society unite in protecting itself; let a temperate spirit of moral reformation be excited; let the co-operation be the most firm and extensive; the crisis of recovery may not yet have elapsed, let the * attempt be large and comprehensive, and success will be more perfect and complete.

The expediency and advantages of establishing a Society, which shall call forth the energies of the laws, and give them a more extended application, must be striking and apparent. For, first, such a Society may greatly facilitate the labours of the Magistrates, by effectually co-operating with them in the suppression of offences. Many measures might be adopted, which if but locally applied, and not carried into general effect, might be attended but with partial advantage at best; or might,

* "Public Virtue (says the admired Burke), being of a nature magnificent and splendid, instituted for great things, and conversant about great concerns, requires abundant scope and room, and cannot spread and grow under confinement, and in circumstances straitned, narrow, and sordid."—Reflect. on Revol. in France, 8vo. v. 5. p. 453.

indeed, but serve to irritate and provoke: for instance, as to that scandalous profanation of the Lord's Day, tippling in Public houses during divine service, no partial execution of the law could promise any effectual remedy; for if the constables in one parish did their duty, and permitted no person to resort to houses of such description, within their district; those who had been accustomed to this species of dissipation, would but resort to similar haunts in the next parish, in which the officers were not equally active in the suppression of the same enormity. And, indeed, we might instance the truth of this remark, in many of the irregularities committed on the Lord's Day; especially in a large city, where the local provisions of parochial vigilance are so easily evaded. In the detection and prevention of such evils as these, the combined efforts of a Society seem to promise particular efficacy: its members will reside in different parishes; they will observe the particular offences which are prevalent among them; they will each give separate information of such: these accounts will be compared together, and if their collective evidence prove the existence of any one species of evil, which particularly outrages public decency, which calls for the active interference

of the laws, and promises a reasonable probability, that such laws may be effectually applied, without shocking any of our allowed habits; some general measure may be concerted, some comprehensive mode may be adopted, by which the laws shall be put in execution at the same time, through the whole of any given district; and thus, by one general act of co-operative energy, at once correct or prevent the enormity. Thus the labours of the Magistrate would meet with a prompt and effectual assistance.

But there is another advantage attending the establishment of a Society for the Suppression of Vice, in facilitating the exertions of the Magistrate, which is allied to that already mentioned. It may afford the most accurate and extensive information of the existence of an evil. In a Society, information is derived from all quarters, not only from the members of which it is composed, but also from other individuals, who interested in the welfare of the community, may have the inclination, and in their different walks of life, the opportunity of communicating such enormities, as may come within their knowledge, or fall under their particular observation: here proof is accumulated on proof; it is not a few solitary instances of irre-

gularity which are presented to view; it is not the commission of an evil in this or that particular spot; but it is a series of facts, corroborating facts; a wide and comprehensive statement of evidence, not only accurate in its detail, but vast and extensive in its scope; which places not detached and isolated parts, but the grand body of the subject full in view; which embraces the whole in one prospect, and grasps at once the full magnitude of the object. There are some species of corruption, indeed, which from their very nature avoid the light, and are more difficult of detection: of such it may not be easy to collect any accurate account, or to ascertain their precise nature and extent. But even in this respect the combined efforts of a Society seem to promise a reasonable prospect of success; as its observation will be general and diffusive, and the least shadow of such enormities will scarcely appear undiscovered: the faintest ray may disclose the existence of the evil, and the united efforts of a Society may trace it through all its tortuous windings, and fathom its most covert haunts; and though, perhaps, it may not always bring the perpetrators to justice, it may in some measure ascertain the extent of the evil, and at least obstruct its progress, by making it publicly known to

the world. Both extent of information, and vigour of suppression, appear to belong to a Society, which may materially assist the exertions of the Magistrates,* and effectually co-operate with them in the correction of vice.

Another advantage attending the institution of a Society is, that from the number of its members, vice may be kept in check; it may be driven into obscurity; it may be forced into retirement; and no longer be permitted openly to expose itself to the broad face of day, unnoticed and unpunished. At the present day vice is bold, daring, and unawed; it is unmoved by threats, and unappalled by the fear of correction; it stalks abroad in all the careless security of hardened guilt, and desperate depravity. The blush of shame is no more: the ingenuous feelings of detected irregularity, the fearful and retiring consciousness of vice are gone: a base, shameless, obdurate, and persevering obstinacy in evil has succeeded. In correcting so depraved a state of public morals, the numerous efforts of a Society seem

* It is with great satisfaction the Society acknowledge the ready support and co-operation they have received from the Magistrates. They avail themselves of this opportunity of disclaiming all interference with their duty: on the contrary, their aim is to facilitate their labours by information, and by lending their assistance in the suppression of enormities, where it can in any measure be of service.

to promise great success: each member may exert himself to observe the daring insolence of vice; each may communicate the particular object of his observation; and each may discountenance it at the time, or act in concert with the Society, as such instance may demand immediate correction, or require something stronger than individual power to suppress it. If by these means vice may in any measure be deprived of its hardened exterior; if it may, in some degree, be compelled to submit, and to retire from the public eye; even in this respect much good may be effected; as example is contagious, and what has once been regarded with abhorrence, if continually presented to us, from the frequency of custom insensibly grows upon us, and familiarizes us with its view. The danger of bad example is ever great; and though, perhaps, we may not altogether subscribe to the idea, that " vice loses half its evil, by losing all its grossness;" yet, surely, so far as man is the creature of imitation, and is prone to be led away by example, when vice is deprived of its gross and pernicious exterior, it may justly be said to lose a great part of its evil. When we cannot attain the whole of an object, wisdom will instruct us to be contented with a part: if we

cannot wholly suppress vice, if we cannot prevent its existence, yet, surely we may in some measure deprive it of its destructive influence, we may in some degree counteract its baneful effects: we may at least stem the force of the torrent, confine it within certain bounds, circumscribe it within a limited channel, and keep so guarded an attention to its course, as to prevent it from overflowing its banks, and from wasting and desolating all around it.

There is another advantage attending a Society which is almost peculiar to it: a Society will not only be prompt to execute, but it will have many opportunities of exerting its milder and more amiable influence in prevention.*

* It is with great reluctance that the Society have resorted to measures of extremity, in the cases to which they have applied the corrections of the law, and which have already appeared before the Public. But it must be evident that there are some offences against society, which are marked with so deep a die of moral turpitude, which are so pernicious in their effects, which argue so total a want of principle in the perpetrators of them, and demand such promptitude and vigour in detecting and suppressing them; that all conciliatory means of prevention would but defeat the ends of justice, by putting the abettors of such offences on their guard, prove delusive and trifling, and injure the cause it is their purpose to uphold. The same moderation which persuades to mild and conciliatory means of prevention; commands to prompt and vigorous means of punishment. If moderation be violated by harsh and hasty measures, which overstep the boundary of temperate correction; it is equally violated

It is the great rule, the fundamental basis of the conduct of this Society, now recommended to public support, that PREVENTION IS PREFERABLE TO PUNISHMENT. In cases of heinous turpitude, which either deserve the rigour of the law, or which no power short of the strong arm of justice can correct; the preventive means of mild representation, sober expostulation, or the deterring threat of prosecution may be always first resorted to.

In attempting to remedy public grievances, a Society will be the prosecuting party, and consequently will have the power either of proceeding to punishment, or of warning to prevention. It may first expostulate, it may state the provisions of law; appeal to the reason, or decency, or prudence of the offending party; and if such overtures of prevention be disregarded, it may proceed to enforce the laws: it may first exert the mild temper of a friend, it may *request* offenders to desist; and secondly, it may add effect to its solicitations, by holding in reserve the power of compulsion,

by tame and weak measures, which come short of the desired effect. By either extreme, moderation is violated. It will, however, be the invariable rule of this Society to prefer preventive correction, in every case, where it can be applied with any reasonable promise of effect.

and the vigorous execution of the law. The course of prevention is silent and unobtrusive; it deprives avenging justice of its frown, and attracts no popular applause by the open exposure of vice: but it is an amiable and eligible mode of correction, and generates a spirit, not of haughty and unwilling subjection, but of willing obedience, and ready submission to the law. Such an amiable influence a Society has the power of exercising in a very superiour degree, with every temper and resource to carry it into the most extensive effect.

But, besides, the good which promises to attend the establishment of a Society, in assisting the Magistrates—in giving increased activity to the execution of the laws—in obtaining accurate and extensive information—in discountenancing vice, and checking its daring and obtrusive depravity—and in employing the more lenient means of prevention; there is yet one advantage to be derived from a Society, which exceeds those already mentioned in its preserving efficacy, excellent and powerful as they must be allowed to be. This advantage is the influence * which a large body of per-

* The influence here alluded to, is that which is ever derived from a virtuous example; if such could in any degree be ex-

sons, united for the suppression of vice, with one common purpose, one common resolution, may be supposed to excite through society at large, which may induce their countrymen to co-operate with them by example, by pecuniary assistance, by observation, by information, and by using all opportunities of prosecuting the same common cause.

If once an association, originating from a few individuals, who are alive to the common danger, should be able to convey its spirit through society at large; if once it should rouse our attention, and open our eyes to our distressed situation; it might, small as its beginnings were, be a foundation of future good, the most stable, permanent, and secure. It is by no means the aim of this Society to circumscribe the number of their members; they are well convinced that the cause is common, and

tended, it would not fail of exciting a temperate resolution to discountenance and suppress vicious conduct, by the adoption of wise, prudent, and cautious measures. It is the object of this Society to convince the Public that our condition demands some such influence to correct and to preserve us: if such a conviction could once become general, it might give birth to that salutary spirit, which by correcting ourselves, might preserve society, by diffusing itself through all degrees of it.

——— totamque infusa per artus
Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet.
Virg. Æn. 6.

that to give efficacy to their endeavours, co-operation must be common also. Their object is to awaken their countrymen to a sense of their danger, to shew them that they are arrived, if not at the crisis, yet at an alarming state of the disease; to place not only the existence, but the deformity of corruption full in their view, and to convince them that their utmost exertions are necessary to detect and defeat it;* to excite a spirit of vigilance in all to whom religion and social order are dear; to put men upon their guard against the insidious means, which are but too successfully used, to scatter the blasting influence of sedition and infidelity; to persuade every man to preserve himself; to protect his family; to guard his own house from infection; and to associate with his neighbours in detecting enormity, and applying to it the provision of the law. Their object is, to rouse a spirit of exertion in each individual, through every part of the community; to confirm and strengthen every separate link, that the great chain of society may be firm, compact,

* "What is right, should not only be made known, but made prevalent; what is evil, should not only be detected, but defeated."

Thoughts on the Cause of the present Discontents.

Burke's Works, 8vo. vol. 2. p. 331.

and unyielding; to call upon all men to exert themselves in the circle in which they move; in each separate parish to carry the laws into effect; to be active and vigilant in the inferior relations of the magistracy; to execute with spirit and energy the various excellent regulations for the preservation of parochial decency: it is a spirit to save, a disposition to correct, a mind alive to the growing malignity of licentiousness, they desire to extend through society at large: they are well assured that it is not by a few individual instances of correction that any general good can be produced; that the torrent can alone be stopped by united opposition; by awakening caution and vigilance, not in the inferior relations of the magistracy alone, but in every man who forms a part, however small, in the grand structure of society: the shaken edifice is not established by a few local props, it is by communicating strength and stability to the whole, that the building can be deemed secure. If we hope for preservation, reformation must be general; the spirit of moral reform must, in some measure, pervade every part of the community, for all are infected, and all demand some species of remedy.

Such an association might exist without sus-

picion; it might neither awaken the alarm of the government, nor the fears of individuals; the admission of members, must from its very nature, be guarded; it must consist of those who are conscious, that without the security of laws, the corrupt propensities of man could not be restrained, nor moral order and human society exist. Such men must be friends to civil restraint and religious establishment, the possession of these blessings it should be their great object to perpetuate, by carrying into effect the means appointed by the state for their preservation: the provisions of civil polity then must alone engage their attention, and every deviation from it, every the least advance to a political question, most cautiously and guardedly avoided.* To assist the state in the preservation of moral and religious order, must be their sole object; and whatsoever exceeds this boundary, must be considered as an instance of corruption,

* The Society for the Suppression of Vice, take this opportunity utterly, and solemnly, to disclaim all interference with politics, properly so called: the prevention of civil offences, and the execution of the laws, in suppression of such offences, are the proper objects of their institution. All cases of sedition, or others of a political nature, should such occasionally be disclosed by their vigilance, they will transmit to the Magistrates, or to the officers of government, whose peculiar duty it is, to take cognizance of offences committed against the state.

as a perversion of the purposes of their association, and a step towards their dissolution.

Nor will such an association alarm the fears of individuals. It must be evident that society cannot exist without the security of civil restraint: and what may not be worthy of animadversion in an individual, when generally practised, may be highly offensive to regularity, and forcibly demand the intervention of law. Every person, therefore, is not to consider himself in his individual capacity alone, but as bound to contribute, by the influence of his example, and his personal conduct, to the general welfare of the community; in his collective capacity, he is bound to give no offence to the state. No one, therefore, can consider himself as justly aggrieved, who upon repeated warning given him to desist, still perseveres in his breach of the laws; every man is supposed to know what the laws are, and if he intentionally break any provision of them, he justly subjects himself to the penalty attending such breach. Besides, as we have mentioned before, all reasonable means of prevention will be first resorted to, before any act of legal correction will be put in force; and if after such notice, any person still persist in his illegal practice; the general good of society,

the collective interests of the community are paramount to all other considerations, and must supersede all attention to personal regard. There can then be no well-founded apprehension of evil from the diffusion of a corrective influence; it can neither excite the alarm of the state, nor the fears of individuals; and it may be productive of the most excellent effects; it may give efficacy to the laws; it may reform our corruption; it may finally preserve us.

And here the Society beg leave to assure the Public, that it shall be their constant endeavour to characterise their proceedings with caution, prudence, and moderation. They are by no means, undertaking that wild, extravagant, and impossible task, the total suppression of vice, or waging an idle war of extermination against it: desirable as the attainment of such an object may be, they are convinced, that it is not within the misconception of even the most inexperienced, to uphold the practicability of such a design for a moment; as it would be founded on unreasonable presumption, it must terminate in confusion. It is by no means their intention to enforce those provisions of the law, which from the evident change of manners, may be considered as obsolete; or to shock the

feelings of modern life, by attempting to circumscribe those ordinary gratifications, which the enlarged freedom of the present times has sanctioned and prescribed. In some respects our manners regulate the laws *; to the execution of them they certainly give a temper and complexion. Laws are the creatures of circumstance; they are enacted to meet particular evils, which, if suffered to increase, would endanger the security of the community: the evils which are prevalent in one age, may in another be discontinued; or the manners of society may have acquired such a degree of refinement, as to render the application of certain legal provisions unnecessary or impolitic.

In such instances moderation and caution are

* By applying to the table of the penal laws, placed at the end of this address, it will appear, that there are some of their provisions, which, at the present day, are utterly impracticable; those particularly which relate to that part of the observance of the Sabbath, attendance on public worship. These laws were enacted to meet particular evils; and the manners and temper of those times, required and admitted such correction. It cannot indeed be denied, that such laws are required, at present; an equal necessity may exist; but the temper and disposition of the times are different, and will not admit of those modes of corrrection, which the more simple manners of our ancestors accepted as necessary restraints. Unless this distinction be nicely observed, the most promising attempts at correction must want that discrimination and caution which can alone ensure them success.

necessary, to distinguish between those gross vices or unbecoming irregularities, which at all times threaten the well-being of society; and those acts which former times have considered as aberrations from rectitude, for the suppression of which they have provided legal correction, but which the refinement of modern life, admits as practicable and indifferent. Regard must be had to the complexion of the times, that delicacy be not violated by the attempted suppression of customs, which are considered as harmless, or allowed; and that refinement be not deprived of any of those ordinary enjoyments, which from gradual and inveterate usage, have grown into such prescription and habit, that any attempt at correction might prove ineffectual or hazardous. Indecency at one period of civilization, is considered as decency at another: and, doubtless, if our ancestors could view the increasing luxury of our modern times, they would condemn many of our allowed customs and habits as exorbitant and indecent, as they exceed that measure, which they prescribed as the boundary of their own conduct. To carry then the laws into indiscriminate effect, without regard to the different degrees of refinement, which obtained at different periods of society; to use the same means, to ac-

complish objects varying in magnitude and complexion, would be rash, hazardous, and impracticable. Such an attempt could but arise from ignorance and inexperience, and could promise no other termination than failure and mischief. It would be one of those designs, which, like all others, originating from hasty and immoderate zeal, would prove, that its abettors had warm hearts with weak heads, and would but degrade the cause it was intended to support. Without moderation *, the sure offspring of deliberate wisdom, no success can justly be expected, particularly in a work of reformation, which, however guardedly and moderately conducted, must from its very na-

* If any thing could at once be fatal to an institution established for the purposes of reformation, it would be that undistinguishing zeal, which adopts sweeping and comprehensive measures, without due attention to their bearings and effects. The Society are so thoroughly convinced of this important truth, that they had rather suspend the execution of a measure by which prudence or delicacy would be violated, than enforce it, though it promised a probability of effecting considerable good: they had, on all occasions, rather fall short of the mark than exceed it: they are well aware, that moderation is the grace which will render their conduct becoming, and recommend them to public support. On this occasion they would adopt Tully's sound and prudent advice to his son, in its most extensive application—quidem certè est adhibendus MODUS, ad MEDIOCRITATEMQUE revocandus: eademque MEDIOCRITAS AD OMNEM USUM CULTUMQUE VITÆ transferendâ est. Cic. de Offic. lib. 1.

ture be unacceptable and unpleasant. Moderation will instruct the Society to use every conciliating mode of giving effect to the laws, and to weigh well the *season* and the *aptness* of their execution: moderation will instruct them, on one hand, to be wary in the detection of vice, and resolute in its correction; on the other, to be mild and forbearing in prevention: it will generally instruct them to act with delicate regard to the character and interest of individuals, and yet not weakly to compromise, when individual irregularity is rashly persisted in, and threatens to deteriorate the public morals: it will instruct them to discriminate between allowed and forbidden freedoms of action; never to surpass the boundary of sober temperance in correction; but in all doubtful cases, whether of a private or public nature, ever to sink the balance in favour of forbearance, and that increased liberty of action, which, however much it is to be lamented, modern manners sanction and allow: it will instruct them generally to prefer forbearance to commission, conciliation to variance, caution to haste, and prevention to punishment: in fine, it will induce them calmly to deliberate before they proceed to action, and on no occasion to resort to extremities, before

every reasonable mode of preventive correction have proved ineffectual. Conducted with such views, and moderated by such a temper, the Society may presume to claim the approbation and co-operation of the good, and proceed with firmness in accomplishing the undertaking in which they are engaged. Such a cause, they trust, has a forcible claim to support, and such means seem liable to no just objection.

But, perhaps, it may be said, this may be very pleasing in theory, but it cannot be reduced to practice: we grant it is necessary that something should be done; our condition but too sensibly calls for amendment, but the scheme you propose, is inadequate or impracticable; it promises but little prospect of success; either our disease is incurable, or we are so ignorant of our true state, that we will not be convinced of the necessity of any increased exertion to correct it, or so indifferent, that even the most pressing application will be unable to rouse us from our lethargy: the influence you mention, would indeed be productive of very excellent effects; but the idea is chimerical, it never could be diffused through the community. The Society then appeal to fact, they appeal to experience, they appeal to the history of former times: it will appear, they

trust, that such institutions have already existed, most extensive in their operation, and most beneficial in their effects; nay, perhaps it may appear, that our present condition, weak as it is, would have been still worse, had it not been for the remaining influence of former Societies, established for purposes similar to this.

The Society are unable to discover any traces of a similar design in the times antecedent to the usurpation of Cromwell.* In his days, immorality was veiled under the specious shew of religion; and from the abuse of some of the most important doctrines of our faith, irregularities were committed on principle. To stem the tide of systematic licentiousness, some faint attempts were made to institute a Society for Reformation: but by whom it was proposed, to what extent it was carried, or what effects it produced, they have not been able to discover. Something of the kind appears to have been attempted, but whether it was attended with any

* The existence of a Society for Reformation, during the time of Cromwell, is generally mentioned in "*The Account* of the Societies for Reformation of Manners. p. 3. 12mo. 3d edition, 1700. in which they call upon the Public to support them, from the experience of the good effects which similar institutions have before produced, "from what was done some years ago, in times of usurpation."

sensible good effect upon the vitiated morals of the times, it is difficult to determine.

Of " The Societies for the Reformation of Manners," which were instituted a few years after this period, most ample accounts remain, both of the necessity, and the excellence of their establishment. After the period of usurpation, when Charles the Second was restored to the crown, all history warrants us in the assertion, that the times were scandalously profligate and licentious. Attached to the manners of the French, who had received and protected him in his misfortunes, the King introduced their customs and vices into this country. His court * was the scene of the most complicated debauchery, and the contagion but too rapidly spread, and infected every rank of society. After the re-esablishment of peace and security, by the restoration of the legal heir to the throne,

* The Society cannot omit this opportunity of recalling to the recollection of the Public, the great obligation the country is under to his present Majesty, for the exemplary rectitude of his moral conduct. Extraordinary principles have lately operated to pervert or corrupt, which have originated from designing individuals ; and it requires no great degree of penetration to discover to what a fatal heighth they would have arisen, had they not been depressed, not only by the steady opposition of Government, but by the firm rectitude and chaste morality of the Royal Example.

the full tide of popular affection, as may reasonably be supposed, sanctioned the corruptions of the court, and branded every complaint of decency and morality with the odious names of disaffection and treason. Thus that corruption of morals, which was permitted to obtain under the fostering partiality of public affection to the King, gradually swelled into a torrent of licentiousness: the most poisonous principles were avowed; regard for religion and morality was weakened; and a general obliquity of sentiment appears to have prevailed. We, of the present day, are in some measure able to discover the degree of dissolute phrenzy which then infected society: the slightest perusal of the publications of those times will afford but too ample evidence of their depravity.

Corruption thus introduced, maintained its usurpation through the whole of the King's life. During the short reign of his successor, James was so constantly embroiled with his people, that it cannot be expected there should have been much attention paid to civil polity, or to the necessity of reformation, imperious as it must be allowed to have been. On the accession of William and Mary, when affairs began to assume a more settled form, a disposition appeared to oppose the growing con-

tagion of vice. Early in this reign, a small party of private gentlemen, not consisting of more than five or six, resolved to use their joint efforts in discountenancing immorality, by bringing offenders to justice. They were indefatigable in their exertions, and at length, after encountering numberless difficulties, their dauntless resolution rose superior to every obstacle, and proved the corner stone of a salutary as well as magnificent design—the most extensive establishment of Societies for a general Reformation of Manners.

It was in the early part of the reign of William and Mary, that these Societies were established. At first, as might be expected, their progress was slow. It is no common labour to establish a Society of any kind; and the institution of one, which was not only attended with great personal labour and assiduity, but with no inconsiderable degree of odium, must have met with no ordinary difficulty. For the first four years of this reign, we hear but little of them; they were instituted, but it does not appear that they had attained any great degree of maturity before the year 1691, when they obtained the patronage of Queen Mary.*

* See "An Account of the Societies for the Reformation of Manners in England and Ireland," &c. This book is now very

The ACCOUNT of these Societies begins from their earliest origin: it sets out with shewing the necessity of such institutions; and surely from the following extract, the most imperious necessity seems to have existed, that some means should have been resorted to, to check the progress of vice, which should at least oppose, though they might not prevent it.

"It is very well known that in the late times,* profane swearing and cursing, drunkenness, open lewdness, and prophanation of the Lord's Day, were generally discouraged and suppressed. And it is as well known, to our shame, that those sins have not only revived among us, by reason of the impunity of offenders, the countenance and preferment they have met with, and the contagion of great and ill examples, but have been committed with great impudence, and without controul, without either shame or the fear of the laws, so that they were seen andheard at noon-day, and in our open streets.—And thus debauchery diffused itself throughout the whole body of the nation, till at last our morals were so corrupted,

scarce; there were several editions of it. To give the design the greatest publicity, it was sold at a cheap rate.

* This is an allusion to the attempts at reformation, made during the usurpation of Cromwell, already adverted to.

that virtue and vice had with too many changed their names."*

Allowing for the truth of the above description, it must appear, that a most imperious necessity existed, of vigorously attempting the correction of the public morals. The Account then states the origin of this attempt. That, " when things were in this dismal and almost desperate state, it came into the hearts, it seems, of five or six private gentlemen of the Church of England, to engage in this difficult and hazardous enterprise."

It then mentions the difficulties which attended the undertaking, arising from those who opposed or discouraged it,† till it was patronized

* The following passage from Bishop Burnet's History of his own Times, strongly confirms the above account; it describes the state of the nation in the year 1692, " Upon the whole matter, the nation was falling under such a general corruption, both as to morals and principles; and that was so much spread among all sorts of people, that it gave us great apprehensions of heavy judgments from heaven."—See Burnet's History of his own Times, folio, vol. 2. p. 102, where some account is given of the progress of the Reformation Societies.

† There are, perhaps, *four* descriptions of persons, from whom either opposition or discouragement may be apprehended, in an attempt to correct the depravity of public morals. *Firstly,* those whose interest it is, to encourage such depravity, as their means of subsistence are public plunder, and lawless ravage; these are the avowedly scandalous, and licentious: as the exertions of a Society

by the Queen: her Majesty's exertions in favour of reformation, and the loss the cause

for the Suppression of Vice, would deprive such of the unlawful means of a wretched existence; and as there are no common principles on which they can argue, it would be vain to apply to them for support.—*Secondly*, those who confound reformation and innovation together, and who can see no difference between the commanding necessity of amendment, and the rashness of speculative novelty. Such may be met upon their own principles: and on the presumption, that the condition of society is not stationary, that it is ever varying either towards an advancing or retrograde state; it must be evident that it is ever innovating towards a new condition: in the one instance, it is that increasing novelty which is always to be desired, and which ripens to perfection: but in the other, it is verging towards deterioration, and consequently every approach it may make towards such a condition, is an innovation, which by gradual encroachments, may attain such a preponderance, as not only to endanger, but to destroy society.—*Thirdly*, such as inconsiderately say; this is but an old complaint revived, we have always been told "omnia ruunt in pejus," things are daily growing worse; they have, however, been transmitted to us by our ancestors, they were good enough for them, they are good enough for us, they will last our time. To such it may be answered; our ancestors, indeed, have transmitted these things to us, but it may be doubted, whether they would have been even such as they are at present, unless they had exerted themselves to repress the licentiousness of their times. And as to their lasting our time, so rapid is the progress of corruption, that even this selfish assurance is far from amounting to certainty.—*Fourthly*, such as behold all things with indifference, which do not immediately affect their particular interests; who apprehend no danger, who calmly see events passing before them without regarding their consequences, or considering that though they may not be immediately destructive, yet their future effects may be eventually so, and those, perhaps,

sustained by her death; that still the Societies proceeded to acquire new strength and support from various channels; that respectable persons of all ranks gradually contributed their assistance: " by whose joint endeavours, great advances" were " made towards a reformation of manners, which every day" got " ground—persons of various ranks, of considerable fortunes, and of the clearest character, offering assistance to it, not only in and about the City of London, but from several parts of the kingdom."

not very remote. This description will probably be the most numerous: to such it may be said, that insensibility to danger, so far from diminishing, does but increase it; that careless security is frequently overtaken, unprepared and unawares; that by remaining supine and unconcerned, we do but invite and accelerate the approach of danger; that it is not by indolent inexertion, but by active and energetic efforts that our security can be ensured. Nor can the Society omit to mention, and to lament, " the unkind neutrality of friends," of such as are aware of the danger, and are anxious to save, but whose excessive caution inclines them to withhold their support, and decline advancing to assist them, till the measure have either arrived at full maturity, or dwindled into insignificance and failure, probably through want of such assistance. They would, however, conjure the above descriptions of men to pause, to look around them, and to compare the present times with those they have recollected; and then calmly to reflect whether, if the course of corruption remain longer unopposed, its rapid advances will not be daily maturing us for dissolution?

Such is the outline of the necessity and origin and advancement of the Reformation Societies: originating from the salutary exertions of a few individuals, it will appear hereafter that they arose to such an height as to embrace almost the whole of the respectable part of the community. It is perhaps unnecessary to offer any apology for yet further trespassing upon the patience of the Public, as the Society would prove and not merely speculate: they would shew that such attempts are not only true in theory, but in practice; they therefore offer the result of experience, as the most incontrovertible argument in favour of their design.

The ACCOUNT proceeds to state the particular Societies which co-operated with each other in the attainment of the same object: There was a very large body of persons who composed the original Society, consisting of characters of eminence in the Law, Members of Parliament, Justices of Peace, and considerable Citizens of London of known abilities and great integrity. To these was added a second Society of about fifty persons, Tradesmen and others, who more especially applied themselves to the suppression of lewdness, by bringing offenders to legal punishment: these received great encouragement in the Courts of Judicature, and very particular as-

sistance for several years from the Lord Mayor * and Court of Aldermen—Another Society was of Constables who met to consider of the most effectual way to discharge their oaths, and generally to concert the best modes for the detection and apprehension of offenders. A fourth rank of men who are stated to have been so highly instrumental in the undertaking, that they might be reckoned a corner stone of it, were such as made it some part of their business to give informations to the Magistrate, as they had opportunity, of such breaches of the laws as came to their notice. In addition to these there were " eight other regulated and mixt bodies of Housekeepers and Officers in the several quarters of London, Westminster and Southwark, who differed in their constitution from those before mentioned, but generally agreed in the methods adopted by the other Societies in carrying into effect the great object of reforma-

* The countenance and support of Corporations as well as of the regular Police Magistrates, are most desirable in effecting the objects of reformation. The associated Tradesmen mentioned above, though they may not have confined their exertions, yet appear to have been particularly active in the City, they were supported by the Lord Mayor and Aldermen, who seem justly to have appreciated their utility—This Institution is honoured in having the present Chief Magistrate of the City among its Vice Presidents : the advantage of such support must be evident.

tion—Besides many Religious Societies*, there was one of the Ministers of the Church of England, and another Agreement of the Justices of the Peace, all of which though under independent management contributed their exertions in carrying the same important purpose into effect.

The number of these Societies fully proves the ardour of those who were engaged in the work of reformation; and yet extensive as they appear to have been, they were by no means confined to the Metropolis†. The ACCOUNT

* These Religious Societies appear to have given rise to all the others above enumerated: it is not long since they were wholly done away; they have existed in the memory of some, and those of no very advanced age, now living.—The great promoters of them were Doctors Beveridge, Horneck and Jekyll, they appear to have been very extensively established, and to have met with very general support. The same spirit which established these gave rise to those two very respectable Societies now flourishing—The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, to which we may add another of inferior magnitude, that established by Dr. Bray for the Encouragement of Parochial Libraries.—— See Nelson's Preface to the Feasts and Fasts—Burnet's Essay on the Memory of the late Queen—Also the History of his own Times, fol. vol. 2, p. 317, 318—and particularly Dr. Woodward's Account of these Societies, a cheap edition of which has been lately reprinted at York.

† The advantages of a Society for the Suppression of Vice are not limited: by immediately correcting the manners of the Metropolis, it may also be productive of remote and extensive

states their establishment in most of the Corporate Towns in England; nay, it will be found that their example was imitated, not only in Ireland and Scotland, but over a great part of the Continent, in the West Indies, and in America: they met indeed with the most ample support; for, in addition to the assistance granted by the Queen, in issuing her letter to the Magistrates of Middlesex, the House of Commons addressed the King on the subject, and his Majesty not only mentioned their design with approbation in his speech to both Houses of Parliament from the Throne, but issued his Proclamation "*for Preventing and Punishing Immorality and Prophaneness,*" of which those published since that period are almost literal copies. They were also very generally supported by the No-

good; particularly as from the great and frequent resort to the Metropolis, its manners and habits are imitated and adopted in the country. By applying to the list, it will appear that the Members of this Society are not confined to London alone: as their views are extensive, they solicit extensive co-operation: in common therefore with the inhabitants of the Metropolis, they invite Persons residing in the Country to contribute their support; not only as the ordinary advantages to be derived from the Institution may be felt in the retired and distant Village; but as on all occasions where their assistance may be desired, and they can consistently and effectually interpose, they will readily advance in aid of any exertions, which profess to uphold the common cause, by the suppression of immorality and vice.

bility and Clergy. The ACCOUNT from which the above description is taken, is formally published under the sanction of thirty two Temporal Peers, nine Spiritual, with the Majority of the Bench of Judges, besides that of many of the Nobility and Clergy of the Kingdom of Ireland. The Archbishop of Canterbury wrote circular letters to the Bishops in his province; who also wrote to the principal persons in their several dioceses, to encourage them to inform of the various offences abounding among them, that notice might be given to these Societies, and that they might meet with legal correction—"The Account" was translated into Latin, French and High Dutch, and had a rapid and extensive circulation not only on the Continent but in our Colonies. With so comprehensive a support, the Government, the Lords, the Commons, the Clergy, the Magistrates, and the great respectable body of the People uniting their joint efforts in aid of the great work of reformation; it must be evident that such a spirit of moral reform was diffused through the country at large as must have produced the most excellent effects.

Indeed it would be difficult to say to how great a distance, the influence of these Societies extended, as we find them co-operating with

many of the principal Cities on the Continent, and inducing them by the imitation of their example to diffuse the same corrective influence throughout the whole of Europe. In " An Account of the progress of Reformation of Manners," published in 1706, we find that they had an intercourse with eminent men, Statesmen, Magistrates and Clergymen in many Cities of Switzerland, in Denmark, Saxony, Berlin, Utrecht, Amsterdam, Leyden and other Countries and Cities of note ; in which though the progress of reformation may not have proceeded to the extent it attained in England, it is evident that attempts were made, and that in many instances they were attended with visible good effects. But we are assured that their influence was not confined to Europe, it extended even to America, and the West Indies : their correspondence is still extant with respectable men in Jamaica, and in many parts of New England ; which proves that their communication was the most general and diffusive, and the influence of their example the most powerful and commanding.

We conclude our account of these Societies, by an extract, which fully proves their good effects. " We have seen some few persons engaging in this enterprize before they had any methods

to direct them, or many examples to encourage them.—We are told that many thousands have been brought to punishment for swearing and cursing;—that a multitude of drunkards, and prophaners of the Lord's Day, some of whom kept, as it were, open markets, within a few years past, have been made examples by their means,—that hundreds of disorderly houses, which were little better than stews, and nests for thieves, clippers and coiners, &c. have been rooted out and suppressed;" and after enumerating other enormities which had been corrected, that " as well in Ireland, as England, public disorders are remarkably cured; and, in short, vice is afraid and ashamed to shew its head, where, within a few years past, it was daring and triumphant."

The Society have been thus diffuse in their account of these former Societies for the Reformation of Manners, because, as it is to the wise and good they are more especially addressing themselves, they are well assured that, however pleasing or splendid may be the theory of reformation, yet the tried wisdom of experience will be the firm foundation on which they will ground their approbation of any establishment, professing to carry such important objects into effect. In support then of their asso-

ciation, they here offer the sound and indisputable wisdom of experience: such a design, it appears, has already been adopted with no doubtful effect. The advantages of these former Societies were unequivocal and decisive: the concurring voice * of those who have given us any account of their effects, combines in bearing the same consistent testimony to the extensive good they produced: they neither ripened nor declined in a day; it was through the course of many years that they exerted their corrective energies, and were the effectual means of preservation: by them the spreading conflagration was opposed, and though not wholly extinguished, was brought under, and in a great degree smothered and subdued: their advantages stand upon the page of history undenied and unquestioned.

But it may be objected, allowing that these Societies might have been productive of a certain degree of good, yet that degree they produced, was not worth the trouble and labour of their institution: or they may have effected

* See "An Account of the Societies for the Reformation of Manners in England and Ireland."—"The Help to a National Reformation."—"Disney's First and Second Essays."—"Dr. Woodward's Account of the Religious Societies, &c."—and various sermons preached before the Societies.

a little temporary good, but they have long since dwindled into obscurity. In answer to which, we say, that from the above account, it appears their advantages were not partial and confined, but general and comprehensive: it was not that they suppressed this or that vice, in this or that particular place, their opposition to it was universal: and it cannot but appear that it was eminently successful, as the mass of gross vice was very visibly decreased and circumscribed by their exertions. Their effects seem fully to have justified their establishment, and amply to have repaid the labour of its founders and conductors. But further, the progress of reformation is ever slow and discouraging: opposition to the depravity of mankind can never be expected to attain an early growth to maturity. Vice is quick and rapid in its progress, it suits the temper of man, and all his faculties naturally conspire to cherish and to uphold it: but the progress of good is ever laboured and tardy; effort must succeed effort; toil must be added to toil, before resolution can surmount opposition and reproach, and any sensible advantage can be obtained. Vice is ever obstinate in its own defence, ever active and alert in repairing its loss, and seizing the first unguarded moment of advantage: extreme

vigilance is therefore necessary on the part of virtue; and no efforts she can make, no means she can adopt, will be found to exceed that degree of preparation which the urgency of the case may demand. Whatever either individuals or Societies may be able to effect, cannot be supposed to exterminate vice; the magnitude, therefore, of their means, so far from exceeding, cannot even equal their necessity.

As to the second objection, they produced more than temporary good: as they were not confined in extent of place, neither were they in extent of time; they were not limited to their own nation, neither were they to their own times: it cannot be supposed that the very extensive advantages resulting from their institution, confined their operation to that period of time in which they flourished; such effects could not have so rapidly disappeared, as to have left no impression behind them on the manners and habits of the succeeding generation. The vices they corrected had a preventive influence: while they were either suppressed or kept at bay, the young might grow up untainted by their infection, and virtue being once confirmed into habit, not only the age in which they flourished, but after times must have felt, in some degree, their salutary operation: that de-

gree, it is true, might have been faint, compared with that originally produced; yet may have been so insensibly blended, so habitually wrought into our manners, as to have tended very powerfully to the amelioration of society. How know we, indeed, that infirm as we are, our present condition would not have been infinitely worse, had it not been for the existence of these Societies? How know we, that the spirit of correction they diffused through the community, has not been the powerful means of preserving us from so deep a die of depravity, as might ere this, have reduced us nearer, or even have brought us to dissolution? even the little good which is yet remaining among us, confined as it is, may have been their bequest, the effects of their reformation.

But they have dwindled into obscurity: all human institutions are subject to deterioration, those particularly supported by voluntary exertions; when the founders of them cease to act, the original spirit but too frequently evaporates, and the institution gradually declines. But in what more forcible manner does the objection apply to Societies for Reformation, than to any other human establishments? Institutions, in this respect, but resemble society at large, and meet at different periods with renewal and decay: the majestic oak is not always equally flourishing, it

has its rise and decline in almost perpetual variation: autumn shall gradually prepare it for decay, winter shall despoil it of all its leafy honours; and yet spring shall again animate it with returning vigour, and summer again clothe it with verdure, and again crown it the pride of the forest. Institutions may undergo such a change, or they may wholly cease to exist; yet when circumstance shall require their existence, they may be re-established, and again effect the same purposes, which have approved their former establishment. The futility of this objection, indeed, is so apparent, that it need only to be stated to be exposed: for on no occasion do we reject a partial remedy, when another more effectual cannot be found: and it would be equally reasonable to refuse a medicine which might restore us to health, because it would not ensure to us the continuance of it, as to reject the establishment of Reformation Societies, because their effects are but of limited operation, because they may only reform the morals of a certain period, and because, like all other human institutions, they may be liable to dissolution and decay.

But, perhaps, a still more forcible objection may be urged, an objection which, if founded on truth, strikes at once at the root of such an

establishment: its *necessity* may be called in question; it may be said, that the former times required the institution of such Societies: their state of licentiousness was desperate and extreme, and extreme cases require extreme remedies; necessity, therefore, would justify their establishment. It cannot, indeed, be denied, that those times were most grossly licentious; a general relaxation of principle is allowed to have prevailed with a correspondent depravity of manners, and unless extreme remedies had been resorted to, vice had probably obtained an usurpation boundless and uncontrouled. But in the picture of those times, do we discover no similitude of our own? are there no features which bear so striking a resemblance, as to suggest to us, that we are more closely allied than we might have supposed? Far as the Society would be from too highly colouring the depravity of our times; far as they would be from unjustly depreciating our condition, and thereby generating despondency or alarm, by weak and unmanly complaint; yet they are convinced, that to apply an effectual remedy, we must ascertain the nature and extent of our disease; fairly to estimate our condition, it must be presented open to our sight, it must be viewed free from haughty and self-complacent va-

luation on the one hand, and weak and enervating consternation and alarm on the other. Such a view then, the Society would request every reasonable man to take, of our present moral state; and perhaps it may not fail to strike him, that, so far from having cause to boast of any superiority over them in moral rectitude, all the great leading features of corruption, which marked those former times, may be equalled, if not surpassed, in our own.

A slight comparison of our principles and practice, will afford but too striking a conviction of this fatal truth. We read, that it was the complaint of their times, that they laboured under a *deep corruption* of principle;* and yet, is not our depravity, in this respect, at least equal to that of our ancestors?

In the proportion in which religious principle is prevalent, will moral rectitude or obliquity exist. The state of religious principle, in the times above alluded to, too fatally illustrates the truth of this remark: its relaxation seems to have arisen from many causes, though one is mentioned as particularly affecting it. A certain

* "We became *deeply corrupted in principle:* a disbelief of Revealed Religion, and a prophane mocking at the Christian Faith, and the Mysteries of it became avowed and scandalous."—Burnet's History of his Own Times, folio, vol 2, p. 101.

opinion which spoils Revelation of one of its fundamental doctrines, appears to have been particularly prevalent: not only did Whiston and others afford it but too effectual a support; but attacks of a similar nature abounded in the deleterious productions of Shaftesbury, Hobbes, Chubb, Toland, Tindal, and others, all of whom combined in swelling the violence of the tempest, though each directed a separate blast. We, indeed, have not only had to encounter the same principles which threatened them with destruction, we have received them with that progressive increase of infidelity which, under the fostering malignity of Bolingbroke and Hume, has been gradually matured into the full growth of blasphemous and treasonable outrage; we have received them, trickt out in all the diversified plumage of modern imagery; no means have been left untried to render them engaging; they have assumed all appearances; they have been addressed to all classes and conditions, with singular versatility of argument, and captivating dexterity of talent. The old artillery of infidelity has been newly furbished and mounted, and instead of sending one ball directly to the mark, it has discharged an heterogeneous mass of combustible matter, which has burst and

scattered its destructive fragments in every direction; no age or sex, no rank or degree, has escaped it; it has weapons suited to all ages and conditions; it attacks the learned with deep research and metaphysical disquisition: it attacks the unlearned with bold paradox, vulgar abuse, malicious insinuations, or degrading comparison in songs and ballads, and ludicrous or sentimental tales: nay even the nursery is not exempt from its invasion; almost from the horn-book it commences its advances; perverted histories, insinuating tales of frothy sentiment, doubtful morality, or excessive feeling, are so assiduously applied and artfully adapted, from the age of five to that of fifteen, that it is but too much to be feared, from its progressive influence from the child's tale to the finished novel, the youthful mind not unfrequently confounds unstable notions with religious principle, or insensibly surrenders itself up to the fallacious suggestions of philosophism.

These destructive evils, indeed, are by no means confined to the operation of our own infidel principles; the Continent has, doubtless, infected us, and ripened the corruption: but, even among ourselves, it has been cherished during the whole of the last century, and though it cannot be denied, that its growth has

been, in some measure, prevented by the Religious and Reforming Societies of our ancestors; yet, from time to time, it has acquired but too powerful accessions of strength even from our own depravity. But when, in addition to the plenteous source of home corruption, we consider the fatal influence of vicious principle which has inundated us not only from our neighbours, but from other parts of the Continent; when we consider that the reservoir has burst with fearful ravage, and that all Europe is desolated with the same destructive evil; when we consider with what avidity infidelity has been received, how generally encouraged, and with what difficulty resigned; it will appear that religious principle has had to encounter much more numerous adversaries, much more forcible opposition than in the former periods of society above alluded to; in those times Scepticism abounded, in ours avowed Infidelity and Atheism: in those times principle was but covertly and guardedly invaded, in ours the aggression is daring, shameless, and declared: in those times, Infidelity was almost confined to the learned, in ours, it is made level to the meanest capacity, and poisons all alike: in those times but few attacks were made upon principle, and those scattered, irregular,

and undigested, in ours, the subversion of it is attempted on system and design : in those times licentiousness prevailed because virtue was dormant, in ours it riots in justified allowance, the baneful offspring of perverted reason : in those times Vice had not lost her blush, and Hypocrisy still bore the garb of Virtue, in ours, Vice asserts the name of Virtue, assumes her form, and challenges her rights : in those times Infidelity itself allowed the moral principles of Revelation to be commendable and just, in ours they are the pitiable weakness of idiocy, or the fallacious visions of dotage : they had, at least, the consciousness of evil ; and though, perhaps, practical atheists, would have shuddered at the charge of a deliberate denial of their Maker ; we, on the contrary, justify our desertion of him on principle ; we do not merely stand without in indifference and wavering hesitation; but we rush into the sanctuary, and, with unhallowed voice, declare it to be empty of the Divine Presence : in fine, what with them was the offspring of indifference and scepticism, is, with us, the result of deliberate denial, of principled, if the term may be so prostituted, and declared unbelief.

It is, indeed, far from the intention of the

Society to assert, that this pernicious and perverted spirit is generally avowed, that it is allowed by all, or even by the majority of those who are infected by it, on the broad ground of principle; but, though it may not be openly acknowledged, yet, are not its ramifications and bearings but too generally visible? and, though in the full breadth of its malignant light it would be denied, yet, are not its tints and shades so artificially disposed as to avoid discovery indeed; but yet, to give a most powerful effect. It can scarcely be necessary to mention, for it is almost too obvious to remark, that derelictions of duty to Parents, to Magistrates, or to God, are openly vindicated at the present day, on the false ground of the injustice of prejudicing the mind, or depriving it of its natural freedom, by the impression of any previous ideas. Is not the principle of religious duty dwindled away, and confined to no further obligation than a mere external compliance? Is not that of subordination to Government, resolved into the determination of every man's private will and particular opinion? Is not the youthful mind restless and uneasy under parental restraint? and does it not assert an early claim to independence from every kind of authority? That such a lamentable relaxa-

tion of principle exists must be but too evident to all, for its effects are striking and arrest and challenge observation.

What, then, is our practice? What is the effect of principle thus corrupted and distorted? When the mound is burst away, the waters rush forth in one overwhelming torrent; when good principle is broken down, practice must be vicious and depraved. What is the effect of the relaxation of *Religious principle?* In the violation of this we may discover, that of all others. How is the Sabbath observed among all orders? Is not that distinctive character which marks it as a day devoted to God, rapidly fading away? In a neighbouring nation we have seen God's appointed seventh day exchanged for the tenth; and the removal of this external observance of the Sabbath has had a powerful effect in obliterating respect for Revelation. By our adherence to forms, we may, at least, preserve religion from oblivion; they are the walls and ramparts to protect it, but without forms it cannot nationally exist: every aberration, therefore, from received ordinances, is but a step towards the total abolition of that which the ordinance is instituted to preserve. If, therefore, God's appointed day be disregarded, what shall ensure respect for Revelation itself? In-

stances of neglect of the Sabbath are numberless, not only in the lower, but in the higher and middle ranks of the community: not only do artisans and labourers exercise their ordinary callings, but even the higher classes consider it as an open day, as a day of no particular obligation. Thus the influence of bad example infects the whole of society, and the Sabbath returns not as a day of religious observance, but of worldly pleasure or indolent vacuity. What then are the consequences of this breach of duty?—unbounded licentiousness in speaking of God, open profanation of his name, not a distate alone, but a contempt for Revelation, vulgar oaths, coarse execrations, an oblivion of divine superintendence, and a frigid unconcern, a torpid disregard for our moral welfare here, on account of our rash contempt of what Revelation teaches us shall be hereafter.

If then God be deserted, how shall we perform our duty to man? what is our practice with regard to one another? precisely such as might be expected, when the authority and sanction, and end are forgotten: what is it in that primary relation from which all others emanate? how is the marriage vow observed? if any subject of morality have met with particular violation in the present times, it is this: adultery has of

late been more destructive to our domestic repose, than in any former period of our history. What next is that of Parents? much care is doubtless taken to form the exterior, accomplishment has done what it can to varnish over our infimity: fictitious feeling has assumed the appearance of true compassion; and that sobriety of manners, that solidity of conduct, that chastity of morals, which religious principle can alone effect, have submitted to a shewy exterior, an ostentatious display of affected sentiment, and a superficial flippancy of remark: a restrained and cautious and manly compliance, has given way to a false candour and liberality, which make but small distinction between good and evil, and accept virtue or vice, with almost indiscriminate censure or applause. But too general a negligence prevails among Parents, in inculcating those principles on which any solid moral superstructure can be raised, and the youthful mind misled by a false and flimsy education, mistakes shadow for substance, and places its point of perfection in exterior accomplishment, rather than in sound and stable, and conscientious rectitude of life. What then is the conduct of the next relation? If Parents have neglected to instil proper principles, how can they expect proper conduct

from their Children? Religion, the main spring of moral action, if taught at all, is taught in so superficial and cursory a manner, that but few precise ideas are received into the mind, and the heart remains callous and insensible to those peculiar motives which Revelation proposes as the basis and incentives of morality: hence that morality which prevails, is rather heathen virtue, improved from the stolen light of Revelation; while the jewel Revelation itself, whose faint ray illumines this gloom of heathen night, is past by, forgotten, and neglected, deprived even of the credit which is due to the confined advantages it is permitted to produce. Can it then be a cause of wonder, that modern youth are destitute of that decency of deportment and propriety of manners, which we denominate *Respect?* No longer do we see that retiring modesty, that distant and humble submission, which by keeping each in his proper place, preserved the great fabric of society firm and indissoluble. Our youth, at present, are distinguished by a premature assurance, a presumptuous independence of manners, which assert an undue exaltation in the scale of the community, and threaten to destroy that subordinate degree subsisting between youth and manhood; from what does this evil arise? but

from a want of true principle, and the insinuating influence of those pernicious maxims, which under the late usurpation of Reason over Revelation have been so industriously and fatally disseminated.

Let us carry our view then from particulars to generals—if there be no respect at home, can it be exercised abroad? if subordination be relaxed in the primary relation of duty, how shall it be expected in those but of secondary, or of more remote importance? if the father of the family be disrespected, what shall ensure respect to the father of the State? the different shades in the great tablet of human duty, are so intimately blended with each other, are of so nice a disposition, that if any be removed, they spoil the piece of that harmony and tone which produce a consistent effect: thus, if the marriage vow be despised, parental solicitude will relax, and filial submission will be sought in vain: and if that first degree of subordination be defective; the mind is disposed to bear any authority with uneasiness; and thus, where private obligation is neglected, the general obligation due to the authority of Government will be also undervalued and neglected. It cannot surely be necessary to insist on that grievous decay of the practice of public submission, that intole-

rant and haughty insubordination, which have stampt so fatal a character on our day:—we have seen all the ackowledged principles of submission and authority derided and denied: we have seen their desperate effects; Thrones trembling under their lawful possessors; Sovereigns hurled from the proud heights of regal splendour, and reduced to the utmost depths of humiliation and distress: let groaning Europe, at this moment declare; let Society, at large, bear witness, not only to the present evils inflicted on her by this destructive pestilence, but also to the grievous apprehensions she labours under, that a distant futurity alone, will witness her recovery from them. If submission to Government be relaxed, the laws which issue from, and are sanctioned by it, must also be disregarded. Thus we find that a general disrespect prevails for authority, from the highest to the lowest condition of it. If we add to these, the numberless inconveniencies which arise from the dissemination of this intolerant principle, in the refractory and rebellious spirit of servants, of artisans, and of those other relations of which civil subordination consists: and if we superadd to these, that powerful source by which our corruption is increased, the inordinate licentiousness of the

press, and the enlarged opportunities of vice, derived from the increase of our wealth, our commerce, our luxury, and our population; we shall have but too just cause to decide on the alarming condition both of our principles and our practice: we shall have to lament, that so far from there being no present necessity for attempts at reformation, it is yet more urgent, yet more imperious than it was in those former times; and reason will lead us to conclude, that if Reformation Societies were established when principle was less distorted, and practice less flagitious, the same means increased in proportion to the increased magnitude of the object, may at present be effectual, may arrest our rapid progress to moral dissolution, satisfy ourselves that we have not been idle spectators of the misery that is impending over us, and convince our posterity that our exertions have not been wanting to preserve the estate of our forefathers, and to transmit it to them uninjured, and undecayed.

The Society need not, however, confine themselves to a guarded and circuitous discussion, either of the present *necessity* or *efficacy* of a Society for the Suppression of Vice, they need not advert to those of former times alone, they may appeal for the most striking proof of

their excellence to an institution established for this purpose, even in our day: they allude to "A Society which was formed for the professed purpose of enforcing the Proclamation against Vice and Immorality, which his Majesty's provident care for the public welfare prompted him to issue, about the year 1788." From the different reports of "the Proclamation Society," it will appear that very decided success has attended their exertions:* their numbers indeed are not very extensive: but their list of members contains the names of many Gentlemen of the first rank and respectability in the Country. They appear to have been established with views, which have in a great measure been realized by a temperate enforcement of the laws: many gross instances of vice have been suppressed by their exertions, and many beneficial

* A very respectable author "hesitates not to mention among the various causes which with the blessing of God have protected the principles of the nation at large, from the machinations of Jacobinism, and have produced the marked difference in our conduct in the day of trial, from the conduct of our Protestant Brethren on the Continent; the Society formed for the Suppression of Vice and Immorality, by the express authority of a Royal Proclamation."—See Kett's "History the Interpreter of Prophecy," vol. 2. p. 263, 264. 4th edit. It seems scarcely necessary to add that if such excellent effects be justly attributable to "the Proclamation Society," the extension of the same means may be productive of increased advantage.

measures have been concerted by them, which at the same time that they fully prove the efficacy of such a Society at the present day bear also but too ample a testimony that if after their repeated efforts during the last thirteen years, vice be still so flagrant among us, the increase of similar exertions is also necessary to oppose it with any reasonable prospect of effect.* It is to contribute to the energies of the Proclamation Society, by endeavouring to render the same kind of influence and operations still more general, that the Society for the Suppression of Vice is established. The Proclamation Society have amply proved what abilities, associated in the cause of virtue, may effect, even in these times, and have afforded a forcible encouragement to the adoption of similar measures, to give a more extended execution to the law.

* The Proclamation Society was first established in 1789, doubtless on the strong grounds that the necessity of the times justified such an establishment: this necessity is forcibly expressed in the opening of his Majesty's Proclamation, who observed, "with inexpressible Concern, the rapid Progress of Impiety and Licentiousness, and that Deluge of Profaneness, Immorality, and every Kind of Vice, which, to the Scandal of our Holy Religion, and to the evil Example of his loving Subjects, was breaking in upon this Nation," in the year 1787, the date of the Proclamation. If the state of our moral corruption was so alarming fifteen years since, before the late invasion of the principles of philosophism, how

But, independent of the argument from theory, convincing as it is, or, independent of that, still more convincing, drawn from the successful practice both of former and of the present times; there yet remains one reason for the establishment of a Society for the Suppression of Vice, which would, of itself, amply justify its institution. This is the express requisition of his Majesty's Proclamation, issued in June 1787, in which he not only calls upon all who are in places of Honour or Authority, to encourage Virtue and discountenance Vice; but upon ALL HIS SUBJECTS without exception; no one, of whatever rank or degree he may be is exempted from his Sovereign's charge and command, to put the laws in force against offenders. The requisition is explicit, "For the more effectual reforming all such Persons, who, by reason of their dissolute Lives and Conversation, are a Scandal to" his "Kingdom," his "further Pleasure is, and" he "does hereby strictly charge and command" not only "all" his "Judges, Mayors, Sheriffs,

much more alarming must be our present condition? how much more imperious must be our present necessity, when the former "DELUGE" has been increased by the copious streams and overwhelming torrents of infidelity and insubjection, which have rushed in upon us from the different parts of the Continent

Justices of the Peace, and all other his Officers and Ministers, both Ecclesiastical and Civil, but ALL OTHER HIS SUBJECTS, to be very vigilant and strict in the Discovery and the effectual Prosecution and Punishment of all Persons who shall be guilty of excessive Drinking, Blasphemy, profane Swearing and Cursing, Lewdness, Profanation of the Lord's Day, or other dissolute, immoral, or disorderly Practices.*" The Proclamation further proceeds to enumerate the different objects which claim the attention of those who value the well-being of the community, and which are, in effect, the same, as this Society propose to attain. Every one, therefore, who has a respect for Royal Authority, or who is desirous to ameliorate our present infirm condition, will advance in these times of the most perilous necessity, and partake of his Sovereign's deep anxiety for the welfare and preservation of his People. The Proclamation contains not only a sanction, but a "charge and command," to unite for the suppression of

* As to the *legality* of such a Society as is recommended above, it cannot be questioned: omitting all other reasons which might be mentioned, we ground it upon the firm and solid basis of the King's Proclamation. All his subjects, without exception, are therein required to discountenance vice; and the co-operative exercise of their individual abilities, appears to be the most preferable mode of accomplishing the object.

Vice ; and every one who contributes his endeavours in aid of this purpose, is not only shewing the alacrity of his obedience to his justly beloved Sovereign, but is evidencing the sincerity of his solicitude for the general welfare of his country.

Thus, it is presumed, not only that the *necessity* of a Society for the Suppression of Vice is evident, but that, from the combined evidence of reasonable theory—the practice of former times—the experience of our own—and the express requisition contained in his Majesty's Proclamation, the *efficacy* and *legality* of such a measure are strikingly apparent. The Society, however, are far from wishing to confine the recommendation of their Institution to any of the above reasons ; they are well aware, that the Public will justly expect them to declare what they have already effected ; that, from their past success, they may prove their title to further confidence and support : they may well be expected not to appeal wholly to the respectability or success of similar establishments ; but, to prove, from their own conduct, that their particular Institution is calculated to correct the evils it so forcibly calls upon the Public to assist them in suppressing. Such a proof it was the intention of the Society to have

given, had not particular circumstances occurred, in the course of their proceedings, which render any present communication of them highly indelicate and improper: they trust, however, that, in a short time, these objections will be removed, when it will be their further purpose to lay them before the Public; not only to convince the inhabitants of this Metropolis, and the Country at large, either of the *necessity* or of the *efficacy* of such an association; but also to develope the various branches of a deep and desperate conspiracy against the morals of society; that all who value our present civil and religious blessings, may be aware of its existence, and avail themselves of this opportunity, while it is yet practicable, of resisting or suppressing an evil which, if it continue much longer unopposed, threatens nothing less than the dissolution of our moral order and civil existence.

The Society conclude this first part of their Address, by requesting the Public to give the subject the most serious and deliberate consideration, and calmly to reflect whether any human means appear to promise a more reasonable prospect of effect in correcting our present corruption, than those above recommended,

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SOCIETY,

FOUNDED ON THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE BASIS, CALLING TOGETHER THE WISDOM, TALENT, VIRTUE, AND EXPERIENCE, OF EXTENSIVE INDIVIDUAL CO-OPERATION, CONDUCTING ITS MEASURES WITH MODERATION AND CAUTION, PREFERRING PREVENTION TO PUNISHMENT, AND PROPOSING TO CARRY THOSE LAWS INTO EFFECT WHICH WERE EXPRESSLY ENACTED FOR THE PRESERVATION OF CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS ORDER, BY THE SUPPRESSION OF DARING, PESTILENT, AND DESTRUCTIVE VICE.

END OF THE FIRST PART.